Chamberlain's March on Paris

A Cable from London

RICHARD GOODMAN

Insurance Plunder

OLIVER DE WERTHERN

'The Whole Town Is Sore'

RUTH McKENNEY

Mexico's New Strength

HU WILLIAMSON

'Creating Money'

Three Letters

JOHN STRACHEY

BRUCE MINTON

BEATRICE BLOSSER

Cartoons by Gropper, Fred Ellis, Redfield, Gardner Rea, Richter

ON THE COVER

John L. Lewis

TURN TO PAGE 9

NOV. 29, 1938

FIFTEEN CENTS

New MASSES

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THEODORE DRAPER, foreign editor of NEW MASSES, has retired from the magazine to complete a book.

In response to a deluge of requests, NEW MASSES will hold an auction in connection with its Art Exhibit at the ACA Gallery, on Friday evening, November 25, at 8:30. Auctioneers will be Michael Gold, Yasuo Kuniyoshi, James Dugan, and H. Glintenkamp.

Once a year NEW MASSES editors and readers forget work and troubles to meet for a good time—at the NEW MASSES ball, which will take place this year on Saturday evening, December 3. Soriano will place twenty-four caricatures of leading figures connected with the old *Masses* and the NEW MASSES on the twenty-four panels beneath the balcony in historic Webster Hall. Music will be furnished by the Savoy Sultans, one of the finest dance orchestras in the city, and there will be a lively group of Lindy hoppers, shag experts, and Suzy-Q'ers from Harlem. Tickets are $1 in advance, $1.50 at the door.

The boogie-woogie piano style, which we told you earlier in this series of notes on the coming NEW MASSES' *From Spirituals to Swing* concert was born from grim necessity, grew up in a remarkable Negro boarding-house on South 39th St., Chicago. From 1927 to 1930 there lived in this house three terrific piano-players named Meade ("Lux") Lewis, Pine Top Smith, and Albert Ammons. Pine Top Smith was a peripatetic genius who made a few stray recordings of his tidal style on the piano—records which today are cherished by those hot collectors lucky enough to have them, with all of the reverence art collectors pay a Vermeer or a Fra Angelica. In this humble *académie du jazz* on South 39th St. Pine Top Smith taught the younger men his methods and they caught the feel, the drive, Pine Top got out of the ramshackle instrument in the front parlor. Pine Top Smith died in 1930 and became Immortal; Lux Lewis got a job in a garage and Albert Ammons began playing in Chicago honky-tonks. Albert Ammons, who will appear with Lux Lewis, Bob Johnson, and Pete Johnson, three other great boogie-woogie pianists, at NEW MASSES' evening of American Negro music, has lately made two records—"Boogie-woogie Stomp" and "Early Morning Blues." The former heads *Life's* list of the greatest swing records. Ammons delights in playing a piano upon whose strings a sheet of tin has been laid, giving the instrument an additional rhythmic power. He was once playing in a blind pig in Chicago when a local piano teacher heard him and asked him to go back to the teacher's studio for an audition. The piano instructor intended to give Ammons some lessons if he was willing. In the studio the teacher put a sheet of music in front of Ammons and asked him to play it. No sound came from the piano. Ammons could not read music. The teacher sat down and played through the piece. Ammons sat down and repeated it, note for note, adding his own interpretation. The piano teacher said, "Young man, you are much too good to bother studying music. Don't ever attempt it."

Between Ourselves

Albert Ammons is greatly admired by Count Basie, a piano player himself as well as the entrepreneur of the great hot orchestra which will wind up the NEW MASSES concert at Carnegie Hall, December 23. Today Ammons plays in Hill's Tavern on the South Side of Chicago, three nights a week, $3 a night. In bringing him to New York, John Hammond, producer of the *From Spirituals to Swing* program, hopes that Albert Ammons will finally be accorded his rightful place in music—the very forefront of the jazz artists now playing in the clubs of Manhattan—at a living wage.

"*From Spirituals to Swing* is something not to be missed," writes James Higgins of the magazine *New Directions*. "With John Hammond producing, one can be sure that there will be no fakery, no concessions to popularity. . . . Your remarks on Lux Lewis and boogie-woogie in 'Between Ourselves' were the first sober and intelligent words about jazz that I have seen in a magazine not devoted to music with the exception of Fergusonia in the *New Republic*. . . . Please reserve me two seats at $2.75 each."

The first mass meeting on China since the fall of Canton and Hankow will be held November 27, 8 p.m., at the Actors Church, 233 West 48 St., New York City. "China Speaks to You" is the theme of the meeting, with talks by Dr. Harry Talbot, direct from China's battlefield's where he operated a Red Cross medical unit, Loh Tsei, Haru Matsui, and Edgar H. Rue. Maxwell S. Stewart will act as chairman. The meeting is under the auspices of the American Friends of the Chinese people.

THIS WEEK

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Two weeks' notice is required for change of address. Notification direct to us rather than to the post office will give the best results.

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Who's Who

RICHARD GOODMAN is on the staff of the London *Daily Worker*. . . . Hu Williamson is an American correspondent in Mexico. . . . Oliver DeWerthern is a former editor of the *Life Insurance Enlightener;* the cases he describes in his article in this issue were among numerous similar ones encountered by him when he was in charge of the Life Insurance Adjustment work of the New York State Relief Administration. . . . Len Zinberg's writings have appeared in *Esquire, Coronet,* and *Ken,* as well as in NEW MASSES. . . . Eda Lou Walton is associate professor of English at New York University, the author of *Jane Matthews,* a volume of verse, and has contributed book reviews to the New York *Times* and *Herald Tribune* and the *Nation*. . . . Morris U. Schappes, a member of the English department of the City College in New York, is conducting a course on "The Press and Propaganda" for the Workers School. . . . Clarence Weinstock has written other book reviews for NEW MASSES. . . . Pauline Leader, author of *And No Birds Sing,* is the wife of the novelist Millen Brand. When she isn't busy taking care of her three children she works on a novel and a play. . . . Robert Terrall was formerly on the staff of *Time*.

Flashbacks

MEMO to William Green, who recently advised AFL longshoremen not to refuse to unload Nazi ships! On Nov. 25, 1936, longshoremen at le Havre, France, refused to unload five hundred tons of freight from the United States liner *Washington,* in response to the plea for solidarity by American seamen, on strike in Atlantic ports. . . . The fascist international, led by Germany and Japan, signed their "anti-Comintern" agreement Nov. 25, 1936, which has accelerated the attack on democratic Spain and Czechoslovakia and independent China. . . . While the fascist laid plans to destroy democracy, Stalin discussed new extensions of democracy in the Soviet Union. Nov. 25, 1936, in presenting the new constitution, he said, "Socialism has now been achieved in the Soviet Union and the foundation for ultimate Communism now at last has been built. A proletariat, in the sense of an exploited class of workers who do not possess the means of production, no longer exists in Soviet Russia." . . . The Irish, who, unlike Americans, have not yet shaken off English rule, suffered a great loss, Nov. 24, 1922, when Erskine Childers, the last of five condemned Irish Republican army men, was executed. . . . Engels was born Nov. 28, 1820. . . . Lenin was awarded a diploma of the first grade by the Law Faculty of St. Petersburg, Nov. 27, 1891.

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Chamberlain's March on Paris

He Has His Orders from Hitler, But There Are Numerous Difficulties

RICHARD GOODMAN

London (By Cable).

VIEWED from the London angle, the forthcoming visit of Chamberlain and Halifax to Paris is the newest step along the Munich road. If the prime minister gets his way, this will lead to a situation certainly no less disastrous, and in all probability considerably more so, than that which resulted from the Munich sellout itself. Whether Chamberlain will succeed is, of course, dependent on a number of factors. Nevertheless, even though the British Cabinet as a whole may not have the clearest idea what will be discussed in Paris, and although many competent observers believe the talks will be confined to "general principles," it is known here that Chamberlain himself has the most precise ideas of what he hopes to get from the French. Put in a sentence, Chamberlain plans to get enough from the French to enable him to push on with his negotiations with Germany, which have come somewhat abruptly to a standstill.

It has become known that on November 15 Chamberlain received new and unusually impertinent instructions from Berlin. He was bluntly told that continuance of the talks between the British and French General Staffs would be highly displeasing to the Nazis. It has also been learned that the barrage against France in the Italian press at about the same time was intended as pressure from the other end of the Rome-Berlin war axis for the purpose of weakening French resistance to the Berlin instructions. Chamberlain is giving serious consideration to these demands, but it remains to be seen how far he will go in insisting that they be granted.

Here, then, is the London-end view of the talks.

Chamberlain is convinced that unless he can persuade or blackmail the French into "loosening" their linkup with the USSR, Hitler will not talk further and consequently the whole Munich edifice will be threatened. And Berlin itself apparently has said as much. He cannot, however, demand in Paris a formal repudiation of the Franco-Soviet Pact. To do so would be too blatant an exposure of himself as a Hitler agent. Therefore he is going to ask the French to conclude with Hitler an agreement identical with that he himself brought back from Munich, i.e., a non-aggression pact, and he will insist that this be done without delay. In answer to those who object that to do so is in fact to repudiate the Franco-Soviet Pact, he will argue that this is not so, as the pact would continue in existence but would no longer be "objectionable" to Hitler! Simultaneously and as a reward for imperiling the security of the republic, he will repeat once again, and in the most categorical terms, Britain's loyalty to the Entente.

That such a non-aggression pact would in fact cancel the Franco-Soviet Pact is, however, denied by none here. The pact is an agreement of mutual assistance in the event of unprovoked attack on one of the contracting parties. If now France is to commit herself never to go to war with Nazi Germany, it is obvious that in the event of a Nazi attack on the USSR she could not fulfill her obligations to the Soviet Union. On the other hand, if in the event of such a Nazi attack there was in power in France a strong popular government determined to aid the Soviet Union, existence of a paralyzing non-aggression pact with the aggressor could and would be used by the fascist "Fifth Column" to precipitate civil war in the republic. Moreover, it is pointed out that if France chooses under British pressure to repudiate her obligations under the pact in this fashion, she cannot expect the USSR to regard as operative a pact whose whole essence has been destroyed.

CJ
Crockett Johnson

There is, however, another aspect of the situation as seen here. This is the very obvious reluctance on Hitler's part to conclude such an agreement, at least just at the moment —or rather, to conclude such an agreement without simultaneous fulfillment by France of a number of other demands. It is known that before the Marseilles Congress of the Radical Socialist Party, Bonnet was running around trying desperately hard to obtain such an agreement, or at least a declaration from Hitler that he would welcome such an agreement. Bonnet, however, failed miserably because Hitler adopted the pose that he would be doing France a favor by making such a declaration, and demanded therefore a number of things from the French which neither Daladier nor Bonnet were then, or yet, in a position to grant. (Hitler, it is said, demanded dissolution of the French Communist Party, a limitation of the role of the CGT, gagging the French press, and suppression of all anti-fascist "agitation" by German refugees in France. The nearest he came to getting these demands granted was their reflection in Daladier's speech at Marseilles.)

It is probable, therefore, that Chamberlain will attempt to persuade the French to agree to such a pact, on the guarantee that he, Chamberlain, can get Hitler to lower his price, without which reduction Daladier's position in France would of course be impossible. Needless to say, in this he is either unduly optimistic or deliberately double-crossing. Should he manage to put across such a monstrous coup against the security of France and so of Britain, Chamberlain will no doubt talk nicely to Daladier and Bonnet about the Western air pact, Germany's colonial demands, and the whole question of a "Mediterranean settlement" and Spain.

Here, however, he is likely to come up against difficulties. Judging from the speech of Air Secretary Kingsley Wood, who announced Britain would henceforth concentrate on building fighters, and from lobby talk, the Chamberlain government has already decided,

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William Gropper

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at least in principle, on an air pact with Hitler which will leave Britain permanently inferior to Germany in the air. It is also known that Chamberlain is personally eager to obtain a similar decision from the French. For Wood's speech has aroused considerable hostility in tory circles, so considerable in fact that the tory *Telegraph* has printed articles from its air correspondent which not only expose Wood's arguments but constitute in fact but a thinly veiled attack on the whole government air policy. French adherence to the principle of the air pact would strengthen the prime minister's position in what seems likely to develop into a first-class row.

But it is on the colonial issue that Chamberlain will find the going hardest. First, he has behind him in Britain a huge body of hostile opinion, stretching from right to left, against any colonial deal with Hitler. Second, there is the recent official declaration, forced out by French opinion, from Daladier, refusing to enter into negotiations on this issue. And third, there is the attitude of the Germans themselves, best expressed by Goering's *National-Zeitung* on November 16, that the German Reich in Africa will not be built up at the expense of smaller European colonial powers—the very idea that pro-German South African Defense Minister Pirow is, with the agreement of Whitehall, putting up to Hitler. Finally, there is the effect the Nazi pogroms have had on all sections of opinion in both Britain and France.

Nevertheless, despite Daladier's official denial, it is expected Chamberlain will raise the issue in an attempt to force the French to agree to "round-table" discussions of some kind, probably to discuss the so-called Pirow plan, so sensationally let out of the bag by the pro-German *Daily Mail* on the very day Pirow set off to Berlin. (This plan is to give Germany colonial territory made up from a bit of the French Cameroons, a bit of Portuguese Angola, and a bit of the Belgian Congo, together with an arrangement whereby Germany could obtain raw materials from a common colonial pool administered jointly by an international board of representatives from all European countries with a stake in Africa, including the Reich.) For Chamberlain believes that neither Daladier nor Bonnet is personally opposed to the eventual transfer of certain colonial territories to Germany. He knows that so far as Bonnet is concerned, that gentleman who, in conjunction with Lazard Frères, made £200,000 for himself from the last devaluation of the franc, will, if paid highly enough, agree to give away anything to Hitler, even Alsace itself. And he also believes that Daladier, while refusing to cede any land inside "that vast zone of security"—from the Mediterranean Gulf to Guinea—which he spoke about at Marseilles, is willing to admit the principle of "equivalence," which is the essence of the British plan.

Finally, but as important as any, there is the issue of Spain and the Mediterranean. Chamberlain is anxious to obtain from Daladier the promise that France will finally abandon her sister republic to the fascists by refusing passage across the frontier, not only of all material aid, but also as much as a single grain of wheat—a promise which, taken in conjunction with the operation of the Anglo-Italian Pact and the refusal to do anything about the North Sea blockade, would mean that Britain could go ahead and grant belligerent rights, being followed immediately by France. In addition, there can be no doubt that Chamberlain will also insist that, to further the prospects of the "general Mediterranean settlement" demanded by Mussolini, France shall as soon as possible conclude with Italy a pact parallel to that between London and Rome. As, however, one of the main Italian conditions for this settlement is that the Balearics will remain Italian, difficulties are likely to arise. For the French General Staff insist that whatever else happens the Balearics, those key islands on the Marseilles-Algiers lifeline, will either be "neutralized" or restored to a friendly, i.e., republican Spain.

If Chamberlain does pull off anything like a coup on these lines, there is good reason to believe he will go, perhaps immediately, once again to Hitler, maybe taking Daladier with him. Even if he does—which is by no means inevitable—there is no doubt he will find Hitler this time somewhat less amenable than he was at Munich.

* * *

The Lincoln Brigade Returns

Spain stands today.
Where they held, where they attacked,
In rain, in snow, in valley and cut of hills,
Spain stands.
Each took the wind and the rock on his skin,
Hellfire, the wrath that a perfect sky poured on.
The body trembled; the shape of our will dug in,
Held firm the Spanish soil and ours.

Between Gandesa and the sea,
somewhere, it doesn't matter,
—stony pocket, ragged rock's edge, and the spring-green underbrush—
the fascist bombers circled and spat down.
Somewhere. What did he say,
good friend Americano crouching to west?
He laid his face on Spain.
A place, a morning doubt, an evening certainty.

Jarama
Guadalajara
Ebro River
Names big as these men, stout as freedom,
Come back to our shores with them.
Salud! The people greet.
The miles electric from coast to coast
Contract. The mines, the mills, the offices, the
Dust-thin plains, greet with
The voice American: Welcome, brothers, Salud!
The cause is hero—our chances are good.

And he is not here, he,
brown head on the familiar body, is not anywhere moving.
The eye notes, the mind engulfs the fact
as in the rush of contact and grenade,
H. K., after Gandesa reported missing.
How shall we write him down on this sharp instant?
You that gentled him and smiled upon his smile,
mother, sweetheart, know, he lives in this captured position,
he is well befriended by many.
Mark him,
his hands support, his eyes like ours are cool
behind ten thousand guns ten-times-repelling!

PAUL SHEPHERD.

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"The Whole Town Is Sore"

How New Yorkers Took the Pogrom

RUTH McKENNEY

IT WAS Thursday, Nov. 10, 1938. I walked down lower Fifth Avenue in the warm late-morning sunshine. The stately buildings lining the broad street had a freshly scrubbed look in the fine fall day. A boy in a starched, very clean white jacket stood in front of the Longchamps window, pasting up the sign "Luncheon." Three taxicab drivers gossiped at a hack stand and their voices sounded good-natured and pleased as I passed. A pretty girl ran for a bus, her high-heeled slippers clack-clacking on the sidewalk, her face all flushed, her fur neckpiece flying. A white-haired gentleman in a bowler tramped past me, swinging a shiny cane. The discreet sign on the First Presbyterian Church advised passers-by that the choir would sing an all-Bach program the following Sunday.

I turned into Eleventh Street. The sidewalks were nearly empty, and the street was very quiet, almost serene. The little boy from my grocery store trundled his little green cart past me and paused to tip his hat and smile very broadly. Halfway down the street I noticed that Helen, a friend of mine, had her baby's carriage out on the little balcony. I stopped to climb up the three stone steps and glance at the sleeping child. Helen saw me from her window and she opened the casement to bid me good-morning and report that Peter, her son and only child, had gained four ounces and been promoted to strained carrots. I offered my profoundest congratulations, and set off for Sixth Avenue, feeling warm and good about Peter, and the fine morning, and New York City, and the world.

It was a little after eleven when I reached the corner. Mr. Salvin was putting out the first editions of the afternoon papers. Mr. Salvin is an old acquaintance of mine. His boy delivers the *Times* to our door every morning, and every Thursday I stop to pick up the four weekly magazines. Usually Mr. Salvin has a good or bad word to say for an article in the *New Republic,* a cartoon in NEW MASSES, the cover of the *New Yorker.* On this morning, Nov. 10, 1938, a Thursday, Mr. Salvin handed me the thick bundle of magazines without a word, not even a good-morning. Puzzled, and a little annoyed, I followed Mr. Salvin out of his dark shop. At the street newsstand, Mr. Salvin went back to his work, stacking up the fresh editions of the *Post* and *World-Telegram,* gathering up the left-over *Herald Tribunes.* I hesitated a moment, watching him. Mr. Salvin's face was entirely without expression. His gray mustaches drooped over his tight mouth. His rounded, tired shoulders were relaxed.

Then Mr. Salvin glanced up at me. His eyes were full of terrible sorrow, so that I felt a thrill of shock.

"Mr. Salvin!" I said stupidly, and then I was afraid. A little while ago the wife of Mr. Ginsburg, who runs the laundry, died, and when he came to tell me my laundry would be late because of the funeral, his eyes had been like this.

Mr. Salvin put his finger on the black headline running two decks across the *World-Telegram* and then I read for the first time: NAZIS LOOT, BURN, TERRORIZE GERMAN JEWS; 10,000 ARRESTED; MANY DEAD.

"Pogrom," Mr. Salvin said in a very low voice. "When I was a little boy, we had a pogrom in my town in Russia. But it was not so bad as this."

I moved over beside him, picked up the paper. The El thundered by overhead, drowned out Mr. Salvin's words. I saw his lips moving and his face contorted with anger and sorrow.

When I went home, I hesitated at the door to my husband's study. He is a writer, and we have a strict house rule about conversation during working hours. Yet I needed to tell this thing. I opened the door, and he glanced up from his typewriter, his face annoyed.

"But look," I said, holding up the newspaper black with headlines.

I watched him as his eyes moved over the terrible words. He took the paper from me then and sank back in his chair, spreading the sheets out over his desk. I stood beside him, my hand on his shoulder, and we read together. Finally he put the flat of his hand down on the headlines. After awhile we sat down to lunch, but neither of us felt very much like eating, and my husband said, "The food makes me sick." He pushed away the plate.

After awhile he went to the radio. The woman upstairs was dialing her telephone and at first the announcer's words were filled with buzzing. Then suddenly it came clear: ". . . and scenes of indescribable horror, flames in the night, women screaming, children herded into police stations. Reports say . . ."

"Turn it off," I said sharply.

"No," my husband said. "I want to hear it, all of it."

At three o'clock I went out on the streets again. At the Seventh Avenue subway entrance several men stood in front of the corner newsstand, reading the headlines. They read silently, and as they turned away, one by one, from the little stand and started down the stairs, their faces were drawn and they had a haggard look. On the train everyone bent over his newspaper and a woman across from me moved her lips, reading half-aloud. Her face was deeply absorbed. Two schoolgirls stood at the end of the train, tittering. Their silly, empty laughter made me feel irritable. I wanted to go up to them and say, "Stop laughing. You are old enough to know something terrible has happened. Stop tittering." And I was not the only one who felt their vacant giggles. Men looked up from their papers and stared hard at the foolish girls, the woman across from me stopped her reading to regard them with anger.

At Times Square the train emptied, and I started down the long walk to the shuttle. The air was close and sticky. People hurried past me, brushing my coat sleeve. I passed the flower stand and the cloying smell of the gardenias made me feel a little sick. Just before I reached the wooden shuttle platform I heard a loud voice behind me, shouting words that I couldn't quite understand. I stopped. The men and women rushing past me hesitated, too, and turned back. The loud, wild voice sounded again above the constant noise of the hurrying restless crowd. "Jew," I heard, but the rest of the words were indistinct. I began to retrace my steps, going toward the huge voice. In a moment I was in the center of a pressing crowd. A man stepped on the heel of my shoe and I turned to half snarl, "Don't push." My words were blanketed out again by the voice, and as we turned into the corridor along the subway platform, we saw him.

The man was big, nearly two hundred pounds, and tall. He wore good clothing, a handsome, warm overcoat, a dark suit, and blue tie and shirt. His felt hat was dark brown and nearly new. The man's face was fat and heavy, and just now it was very red. He was exceedingly drunk, and all his fine clothing seemed slightly disordered, the overcoat unbuttoned, the suit jacket rumpled, the hat pushed back on his bald head.

"The dirty Jews!" the man roared. "Got what was coming to them. Dirty Jews!"

The crowd circled the man completely.

"You're a dirty Jew," the drunken man shouted, pointing at a little man with a neatly trimmed Vandyke beard standing in front of me. "Lemme pass. Out of my way, dirty Jew."

The crowd fell back. The man staggered through the rows of people, stopping after a few feet. "We oughta do it in this country!" His voice wavered. His next few words were slobbered, undecipherable.

"Shame!" a woman's voice cried. I couldn't see this woman, she was smaller than the men in front of her. But the voice was sharp. "Shame!"

The crowd began to murmur. A man beside me stepped toward the drunk. "I oughta slam you in the jaw." The drunk wheeled, his face contorted in menace.

"Yuh dirty Jew!"

A policeman pushed through the crowd, shouting, "Break it up, break it up."

The drunk felt he had found an ally. "I bet

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you aren't a lousy Jew bastard," he said to the policeman. The policeman's face went red with anger.

"You're unner arrest!" he said.

The drunk began to cry, his large face sagging. "Don' arres' me, officer." Suddenly he stopped weeping. He shouted to the crowd. "It's them Jews that done it all. The Jews run Wall Street."

The policeman grabbed the drunk by the arm and I turned away, with the rest of the crowd, feeling my face stiff, and the muscles around my mouth aching.

When I got to my meeting I felt wornout. The other writers on the committee talked and the words "protest," and "signatures," and "petition" went around the circle and back.

"Look at this," Joe said, and the tone of his voice, its sharp disgust, clicked against the weariness in my mind. I looked up. He was holding a magazine called the *Patriot Digest*. He turned its pages slowly. The men in the room put down their cigarettes, bent over to see better. The room fell silent. A man sighed. Joe said, "Look!" He pointed to a cartoon. The picture showed a huge figure with a hooked nose and a vicious face, terrorizing two smaller figures, a man and a woman, labeled, "American Labor."

Joe put down the magazine. "They sell it on all the newsstands of New York." He shuffled a pile of literature, pulled out *Social Justice*. "Coughlin," Joe said. He held up the paper, spreading it out across his chest. "The Protocols of Zion," the black type said.

I went home in a taxicab because I felt so tired. The driver said, "What a hell of a thing they're doing in Germany."

"Yes," I answered. I didn't want to talk. But the driver went on.

"I ain't a Jew, lady," he said, "but, by God, my fingers itch to get over there and clean up on them cowardly punks."

"Yes," I said.

"This whole town is sore," the hackie said. "Every fare I've had today has said something to me about it. That don't usually happen, even about the elections."

I saw that he meant it very much and I felt better.

Mischa Richter

"It's a nice place when it's fixed up, Herr Lindbergh. The last tenant let it get a bit run down."

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Fred Ellis

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NEW MASSES

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★

Humanity Against Fascism

THE response of American public opinion to the Nazi pogroms was immediate, vigorous, and unanimous. No responsible newspaper or person in this country has come forward to extenuate fascism's enormous crime against humanity. When President Roosevelt declared that he could "scarcely believe that such things could occur in a twentieth-century civilization," he gave forceful expression to what most Americans were thinking. The recall of Ambassador Wilson and Commercial Attaché Douglas Miller from Berlin was a concrete manifestation of our desire to quarantine a government which could so callously deprive hundreds of thousands of innocent human beings of their livelihood and civil rights. Few Americans lamented the consequent withdrawal of Nazi Ambassador Dieckhoff from Washington.

The character of the American response to the ghastly treatment of Jews and Catholics in Germany was distinctly heartening. It was a dramatic contrast to the confusion and defeatism which spread in some circles after the Munich betrayal. Within a few weeks the spirit of opposition to fascism has stiffened considerably. The fatal illusion that Hitler could be appeased has to a great extent been dissipated. The dangerous mood engendered in some people by Munich, the mood of defeatism, has given way to a determination to act militantly in behalf of democracy and peace. A positive, firm, and unmistakable note has been struck, as Ambassador Dieckhoff will no doubt be obliged to inform his bloodthirsty master. In reading the press comments in France, England, and America, one realizes that Hitler has at last met a solid wall of resistance with which he will have to reckon in the future. The pogroms have underlined the meaning of Munich. Less than two months after the great betrayal, the Daladier-Bonnet government is under severe fire, and Chamberlain can already look back on four parliamentary by-elections in which he must read the repudiation of the English electorate.

But the fight has only begun. The wanton assault on the Jews is by no means over. The Manchester *Guardian's* diplomatic correspondent reported this week that he had learned "reliably" that 200 German Jews had been executed at the Buchenwald concentration camp. *Der Angriff,* organ of Propaganda Minister Goebbels, announces preparations to drive Jews from their homes throughout the Reich. "It is officially estimated," says *Der Angriff,* "that 8,000 homes in Berlin alone will be vacated because Jews in the future will be unable to afford the expense of the homes. Large apartments probably will be partitioned among Germans." While Hitler's conspicuous silence made the headlines, Joachim von Ribbentrop jeered at "the hostile world" during the funeral services for Ernst vom Rath. Nor has there been any let-up in the attacks on Catholics. Indeed, this has been extended to an attack on German Protestants, who have been forbidden to use the name "Jehovah" or the names of the Old Testament prophets. The Nazis have promised to burn "disobedient" Protestant churches just as they burned Jewish synagogues.

No action has as yet been taken by our government to suspend trade relations with Germany. An embargo is the obvious step that must be taken to make effective our universal indignation at the Nazi atrocities. As we pointed out last week, such an embargo is provided for under Section 338 of the Tariff Law. Many firms have already canceled contracts with Germany on their own initiative. This action should be made official. We urge our readers once again to demand the enforcement of a trade embargo and to strengthen the boycott against German goods.

The refugee problem is now a pressing matter which will have to be dealt with immediately and realistically. President Roosevelt is to be congratulated upon his decision to extend the stay of 15,000 German and Austrian refugees who are in this country on a temporary basis. A logical corollary to this decision would be the liberalization of our immigration laws. The quotas on fascist countries should be raised. But it must be remembered that unilateral action constitutes no solution to the refugee problem. It is a world problem, and it must be faced as such. We favor the calling of an immediate international conference, which would include the Soviet Union, to discuss coordinated plans for removing and settling the victims of fascist oppression. The problem cannot be left to Mr. Chamberlain, who is famous for his "realistic solutions." Former plans for refugees were not based on this new and overwhelming situation. The new situation demands a new plan.

In the meantime, the struggle against fascism must be intensified. As long as fascism is allowed to go unchecked, we shall be faced with problems of this kind. Any concession to fascism, in any sphere, is a concession to fascism's racial policy. We have been saying this for years, but this is a truth which is only now becoming apparent to the entire population. We are not faced with a temporary situation, but with a problem which will disappear only with the disappearance of fascism. With an outraged public opinion against it, fascism is already on the defensive, despite its victory at Munich.

CIO Goes Forward

THE most sensible, courageous, and progressive national convention of a trade-union federation ever held in the United States finished its business last week. The Congress of Industrial Organizations worked behind a smokescreen of misrepresentation laid down by the nation's newspapers, but a sober appraisal of the convention decisions shows clearly that the CIO is on the march for a strong, united union movement and a progressive America. Consider the action of the CIO convention on:

Unity.—David Dubinsky made all the headlines with his loud announcement that his International Ladies' Garment Workers Union would eschew the Pittsburgh meeting because the convention would sabotage labor peace. But the CIO conclave actually brought labor peace nearer, when it wildly applauded President Roosevelt's unity plea and voted to press for any peace plan that did not seek to destroy industrial unions and labor strength.

Any sensible approach to the labor peace situation will indicate that the CIO convention makes labor unity more probable. William Green and the AFL executive council have long been offering the CIO a Munich peace—pardon for the original unions summarily and illegally expelled by the AFL and the hatchet, in so many words, for all the new organizations in the union movement, with their millions of members. But now the old and the new CIO unions can no longer be separated by AFL "peacemakers." Now the new Congress of Industrial Organizations can meet on equal terms with the AFL executive council, seeking not "forgiveness" for part of the group, but just peace for all. The friendly and even enthusiastic reception by the Pittsburgh delegates of the dozens of speeches emphasizing

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the need for labor unity indicates more than even the formal resolutions that the CIO is willing and ready for an honest labor peace.

Organization.—A fresh wind blew through American trade-union history when the Pittsburgh convention adopted the first truly democratic constitution for a labor federation in the United States. The newspapers tried to smear the new document by falsely implying that John L. Lewis steam-rollered it through the convention. Actually, the CIO constitution guarantees the broadest kind of democracy to its constituent unions. Discrimination for race, creed, color, or nationality is specifically barred—a provision lacking in the AFL constitution. The CIO executive board has representatives from every union—with the members of the board voting according to their convention strength on roll calls, to prevent any coalition of small unions in the board from strangling the will of the majority. Suspension or expulsion of member unions can only be by a two-third convention vote, an important provision in view of the stab in the back the AFL executive council gave American labor when it suspended the original CIO unions. Member CIO unions under the new constitution are allowed full autonomy, except that the executive board is allowed power to stop racketeering or misbehavior. The AFL executive council has excused racketeering in some of its member unions on the plea of "autonomy."

New Members.—The Pittsburgh convention laid the financial basis for a continued membership drive. In auto, rubber, glass, steel, and a dozen other industries, the CIO pledged to go forward in the historic organization campaign of the past three years.

Political Horizons.—The CIO voted in its new constitution to extend "industrial and political democracy," and implemented these words with vigorous resolutions approving the New Deal, putting the CIO's power and prestige behind labor unity on the political front, and urging the closing of ranks between labor and other progressive forces.

The CIO, on the international front, rose to applaud wildly Mr. Lewis' speech against the Nazi pogroms, denounced fascism, and backed up its anti-Nazi sentiments with a resolution favoring cooperation among democracies to bar fascist advance.

Leadership.—The wildly enthusiastic demonstration for John L. Lewis proved, even to a hostile press, that the working men in America stand solidly behind the great leader of their struggle for union organization. The full slate of CIO officers is a roster of capable and trusted American trade-union leaders. Phillip Murray, chairman of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee, and Sidney Hillman, president of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, were elected vice-presidents, and James Carey, young president of the United Radio, Electrical, and Machinery Workers Union, secretary.

The Congress of Industrial Organizations, at its first convention, proved that the American labor movement is the bulwark of the nation's democratic institutions, the best defender of American liberty. All progressives can look to the CIO for honest, inspired leadership in the coming year's struggle for peace and democracy, at home and abroad. The Pittsburgh convention was the best week's work in American labor history.

For Peace and Democracy

ONE of the most important acts of the CIO convention was its advocacy of a positive policy for the defense of democracy and peace. By unanimous vote the 519 delegates passed a resolution that marks the culmination of the swing away from isolationism that has developed within the CIO during the past year. This is all the more significant in view of the fact that less than a year ago the executive boards of the two largest CIO unions, the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and the United Automobile Workers, adopted strongly isolationist resolutions. Undoubtedly on this question, as on others, the CIO convention speaks for the majority of the AFL members as well. Because of its importance we are publishing the text of the resolution in full:

Whereas: (1) The efforts of the organized labor movement to achieve industrial and political democracy for the people of the United States and Canada cannot be divided from the efforts to achieve and retain democracy throughout the world;

2. The aggressor and war-making fascist governments of Germany, Italy, and Japan have banded together in an effort to impose their domination over weaker nations;

3. They have within their boundaries ruthlessly suppressed the free trade-union movement, reducing the people to economic, political bondage, and have denied civil liberty to the people and religious liberty to the minorities and have shamefully persecuted them for their beliefs; and

4. Labor is most vitally concerned with the maintenance of peace and the continued protection of the people's rights since the free trade-union movement can survive and flourish only when peace and democratic institutions prevail: Now therefore be it

Resolved: (1) That this convention expresses its view that this country and its people should not give any aid or comfort, either through material or moral means, to these aggressor nations which are so determined to bring fascism to the entire world through war and brutal aggression;

2. That this convention pledges its full support to legislation that would be formulated by the federal administration which would effectively carry through such a program; and

3. That President Roosevelt and the United States government should cooperate with all other democratic nations in the protection and strengthening of democracy and democratic institutions.

Anglo-American Pact

THE trade agreements which the United States has concluded with the United Kingdom and the Dominion of Canada come at a deeply significant moment. They were signed in the midst of the crisis in German-American relations because of the Nazi attacks on Jews and Catholics, and on the eve of the departure of the American delegation to the Pan-American conference at Lima, Peru, which opens December 9.

Under the new pact a large variety of American agricultural and industrial products are given easier entry in the ports of the British Empire with whom we share almost 30 percent of the world's trade. Since the United Kingdom and Canada are our two largest customers, this nineteenth reciprocal pact will undoubtedly help in the relief of domestic economic difficulties. The political implications of the pact are, however, even more important than the economic.

In the first place, the Anglo-American pact marks the most important victory for the Roosevelt-Hull policy of promoting not only trade, but peace among nations, through the reciprocal lowering of tariff barriers. This policy runs completely counter to Nazi trade practice based on autarchy and cutthroat economic penetration and blackmail. The signing of the pact constitutes, in fact, a defeat for the Nazi attempt to arrange, with the help of the Chamberlain government, a tripartite agreement in which the United States and Britain would play the Nazi game.

Secondly, there is no doubt that Britain has been compelled to grant important economic concessions that strengthen the position of the United States within the British empire. In view of the present character of the British and American governments, this may well give the Roosevelt administration greater leverage in counteracting the pro-fascist policies of the Chamberlain government. The pact also shatters the Ottawa agreement of 1932, under which Great Britain abandoned her historic free-trade policy and attempted to consolidate the dominions and colonies into an autarchic trade unit. The separate treaty with Canada tends to draw that country more closely into the orbit of the United States and thus to further that hemisphere unity against aggression which President Roosevelt urged in his speech at the Kingston, Ont., bridge last summer. Undoubtedly the forthcoming conference at Lima will take further steps toward binding together the twenty-one nations of North and South America in a common front against economic, political, and military aggression by the Rome-Berlin-Tokyo axis.

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If anything will serve to leave Chamberlain out on a limb and greatly increase the effectiveness of the Anglo-American agreement in furthering peace, it is immediate action by the President, under Section 338 of the Tariff Act, to embargo all trade with Germany. Similar action should be taken against Japan, which today imports more than 50 percent of its essential war materials from the United States, and against Italy. Lifting of the embargo against Spain and the provision of liberal credits to the Spanish government for the purchase of surplus American agricultural products would likewise help the United States and the peace-loving peoples of all countries to reap the full fruits of the Anglo-American treaty.

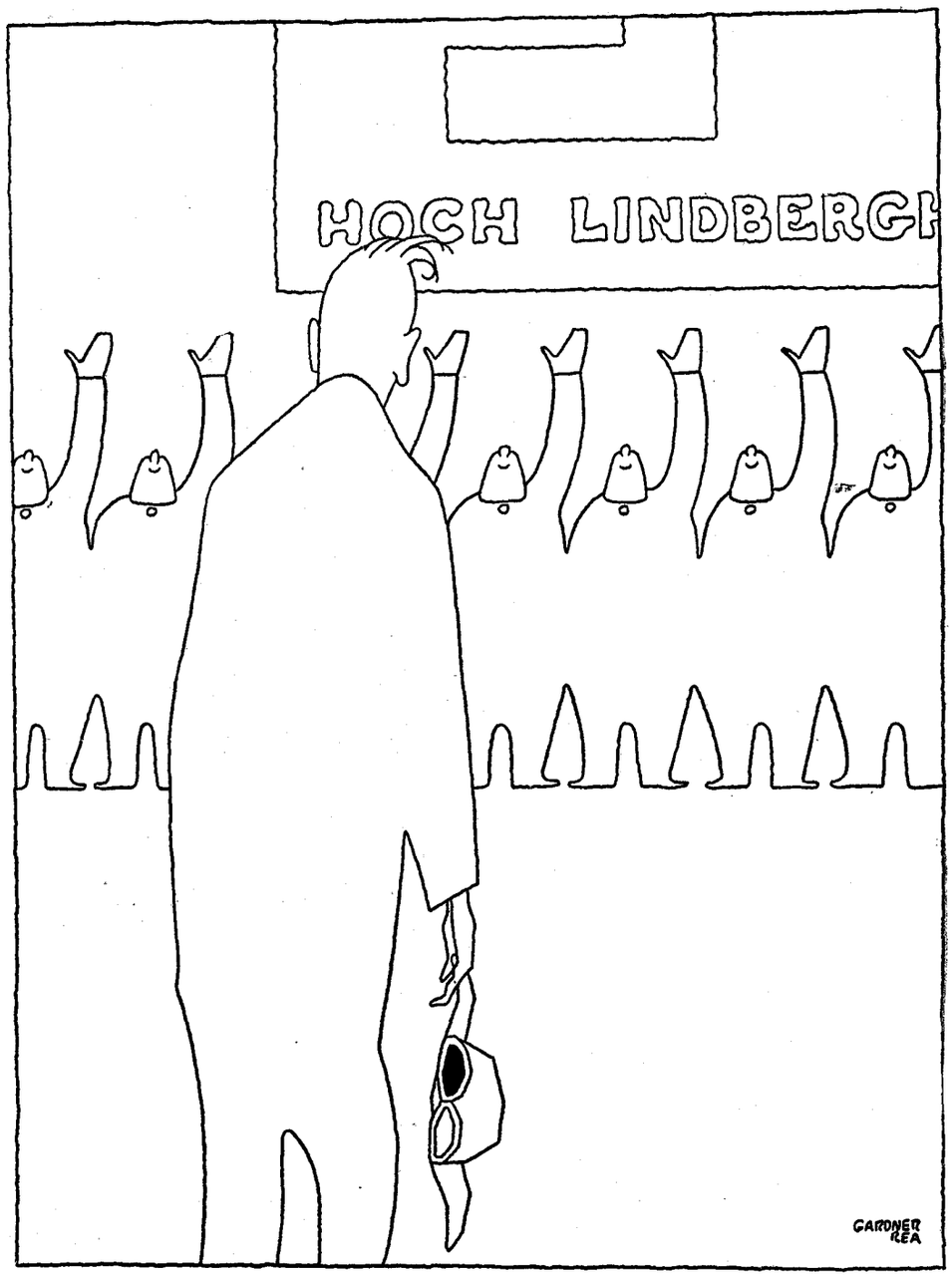
Modernizing Education

SEVERAL challenging suggestions are made in the report on "Education for American Life," submitted last week to the New York Board of Regents by its subcommittee. The report calls attention to certain outmoded procedures and recommends new policies which would modernize the school system. Recognizing that a great number of young people between 18 and 20 are both unemployed and out of school, the report proposes that high school courses be extended by two years. The plan would have the advantage of enabling young people who cannot afford to pay high college tuition fees to continue their schooling. At the same time, this two-year period would enable them to acquire skills which would make it easier for them to find employment—provided jobs were available. The plan has much to be said for it, particularly if it should go hand in hand with an extension of NYA funds.

Another suggestion which we find relevant is that more attention be paid in the schools to problems of citizenship, economics, and international affairs. It is beyond dispute that our present setup in the schools does not provide for sufficient equipment to grapple with the problems of a complex industrial society. Teachers will welcome the proposals that tenure be applied to the 20,000 teaching positions not now covered by the tenure law; that retirement be compulsory at 65, rather than at 70; that minimum salaries in the rural sections be raised from $800 to $1,200. While the report does not explore certain possibilities which the American Federation of Teachers has emphasized, it is sufficiently objective and stimulating to merit close study.

England and France

LESS than two months after Munich, developments in England and France are confirming the predictions which NEW MASSES made after the great betrayal. *The people are beginning to move.* They are recovering from the confusion and demoralization into which they were cast by Munich and are beginning to challenge the Chamberlain-Daladier policy of selling democracy and peace and the national interests of France and Britain for a mess of Hitler promises that are broken the day after they are made. Undoubtedly the Nazi pogroms have dealt the heaviest blow to the Chamberlain "appeasement" policy, but the process of disillusionment began even before the anti-Semitic outbreaks.



Gardner Rea

East, West—Home's Best

Britain.—The growing opposition to Chamberlain is being most clearly reflected in the by-elections. In the five held since Munich, the progressive forces, campaigning largely on the issue of foreign policy, captured two seats from the government, kept the Labor Party in control of a third by a substantially increased majority, and cut the government's majority by half in a fourth. Only at the Walsall by-election was the government's majority of 1935 practically unimpaired. The most significant victory was the election last Friday of Vernon Bartlett, liberal journalist, in what was formerly a Conservative stronghold, the Bridgewater division of Somerset. Bartlett, running as an Independent Progressive, polled 19,540 votes, against 17,203 for P. G. Heathcoat Amory, the government candidate. The significance of this victory may be judged from the fact that in the general election three years ago the Conservative candidate had a majority of 4,329 over the combined vote of his Labor and Liberal opponents.

France.—In France resistance to the new

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Daladier-Reynaud decree laws, which are the domestic obverse of the reactionary foreign policy, has reached the point where even the New York *Times'* pro-fascist correspondent, P. J. Philip, is unable to ignore it. Not only the workers, represented by the Socialist and Communist Parties and the General Confederation of Labor, are firm in their opposition to the new laws, but the middle classes are also beginning to respond to this threat to the gains they made under the first Popular Front government. Indicative of this trend is the strong opposition which Reynaud's financial measures have met from the influential war veterans' association, which is under Radical Socialist leadership.

Within the Radical Socialist Party itself the revolt is growing. At a meeting of the party's parliamentary representatives, after a plea by Daladier, nine out of 105 present voted against the decree laws, fifteen abstained, while fifteen more absented themselves. The fiction of Radical Socialist unity behind Daladier, which the American press has sedulously nurtured, is thus being exploded. Even at the recent Radical Socialist congress there was considerable opposition, and it was only his threat to resign that enabled the premier to secure the adoption of his resolutions by unanimous vote. Now, under the impact of the widening popular movement, this opposition is coming out into the open. It is clear that when the Chamber of Deputies convenes, those—including Daladier—who have been in such haste to bury the living body of the Popular Front may be unpleasantly surprised. Munich settled nothing. The people have yet to be heard.

WHAT A DAY FOR A MURDER
awakes with a song—
Resists temptation to cut even his own throat.
HEIL HEIL HEIL HEIL
Entertains his Sponsors
Wanders in private garden
Daydreams
Studies report that Santa Claus is Jewish
Plays with matches
HA-HA-HA-HA-HA
Enjoys favorite pun: "Adolf, you're getting away with murder!!"
BEAUTIFUL—LIKE A POGROM—
Listens to Wagner
and so to bed—
Wakes up suddenly wondering if sheep are Aryan
A. Redfield

A. Redfield

A Day in the Life of der Führer

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Insurance Plunder

With the Metropolitan as the Biggest Grabber

OLIVER DE WERTHERN

THE top wonder of the financial world today is the Metropolitan Life Insurance Co.

At the end of 1927 it was just one of the ordinary wonders of the economic universe—the largest life insurance company in the world. It boasted $2,388,000,000 of assets. Today, eleven years later, it is still the largest life-insurance company in the world; it has forged even farther ahead of its nearest rival. The Metropolitan now has $4,720,000,000 of assets, or twice as much as it had then. Over $2,000,000,000 has been added to its assets in a decade which witnessed the greatest financial and personal distress, for rich and poor, which ever befell this nation.

Whence came this almost unprecedented gain, averaging over $200,000,000 a year? We can understand the relatively slight increase in assets for the great ordinary companies, which sell their policies to the more prosperous middle classes and to the rich. But the Metropolitan is an industrial insurance company; over half its policies outstanding are of that class: 75 percent to 90 percent of its business is with the wage earner, the industrial workers, the poor, the class which made up the ranks of the unemployed in the last five to ten years.

At the end of 1927 it held, largely for the account of this class, $2,400,000,000 of their savings; in the last ten years, at least half, probably more than half, of its policyholders have been on relief at one time or another, or have accepted some social service akin to relief, free hospitalization, or medical treatment, at public expense.

How did the "Met," doing business largely with those on relief or making every effort to keep away from relief, manage to hold on to the $2,388,000,000 it owed its saving-policyholders in 1927; and above all, how has it managed to nearly double this sum during the past ten years?

The Met does little of its business in the rural sections. The big cities are its favorite stamping grounds, New York City its gold mine. Ask any informed social worker how many of the poor, those on relief, have industrial insurance and you will get a queer look and the answer, "Why, practically all of them."

The Metropolitan's increase in assets, the retention of the $2,388,000,000 on hand at the end of 1927, was not accidental. It was a planned increase, part of the program of the company, committed as it was—and is—to a policy of growth, of increase in size, not in service or quality of service.

Despite the fact that most of those with whom it dealt were in need of their savings deposited with it (much over half of the Metropolitan's policies are short-term endowment policies), and that few of them could stand the strain of the premium payments they had signed up for in the lush days of ten years ago, the over-large Metropolitan managed in all but two of the last ten years (1932 and 1933) to show an increase in premiums collected, of insurance in force, and, singularly, an increase in assets in each year, and, incidentally, a decided gain in surplus in each year.

Until a year or so ago none of the Met's industrial policies allowed withdrawal of the savings balances in them unless the policies had been paid on for ten years. This worked a great hardship on those who needed their money, and the Met made certain limited exceptions where dire need was apparent. The New York State Insurance Department permitted this discrimination, this violation of the law which required that equal treatment be given to all, but insisted that it be restricted to legitimate cases of need; that this power, entrusted in part to agents and branch managers, be so handled that the needy families, not the agent or, of course, the company would benefit by the concession.

It was on such condition that the New York State Insurance Department, then headed by able, honest, and efficient James A. Beha, permitted this, and it is likely that had he stayed in office the Met would have been held in check in this respect, and only a proper, legitimate use made of PS-200—the number given by the Met to the form which was used to prove dire need and obtain this so-called cash concession on old lapsed and apparently worthless policies.

But Superintendent Beha did not stay in office, and the idea of worthwhile emergency cash values for the needy was permitted to degenerate into an orgy of plundering the poor. Let us relate a few—just a few—of the tens of thousands of instances of plunder.

Upstate lives a negro man with a family of five children. From spring to fall he worked at $12 a week, and was forced to get public help every winter. Before the depression he had done better. He had been a pretty good feeder for the Met. Every summer he hopefully bought some Met policies, usually to lapse them when winter and unemployment made premium payments impossible.

In January 1933 he had eight Metropolitan policies, all of them lapsed; he just couldn't or didn't keep up his premiums after November 1931. But in accordance with its custom of gathering in all such old lapsed policies and converting them into premiums, the Met agent, following instructions, thought it a good plan to send them to the Met home office, 1 Madison Ave., New York City, for the PS-200 operation. Three of the eight policies, issued in 1924 and 1926, were really worth something. They still gave a small amount of insurance protection on a paid-up basis. The remaining five policies were altogether worthless; issued in 1931, they gave no insurance protection at all after lapse, and possessed no cash value.

The usual PS-200 ceremonies were gone through: the numerous documents signed, requests for cash value, the required proof of dire need, the necessary papers for the revival and reinstatement of policies. And word came back that the three 1924 and 1926 policies were worth $51.48, and that this sum would be allowed as a concession to him, on account of his dire need. But the Met, as was its custom, insisted that the sum so realized be used to pay on the revived policies, the five worthless policies issued in 1931. It was never the intention of the New York State Insurance Department that any such practice should be permitted; in fact the department is on record as prohibiting such practice. But this was when Beha was in office. With Beha no longer there to watch the companies, the Met felt entirely safe in applying the whole $51.48 on the delinquent premiums due on the five policies, all lapsed and worthless, paying the past-due delinquent premiums from the date of lapse, late in 1931, to Jan. 23, 1933. This took all the money, every cent of the $51.48, and for this sum the man's family got absolutely nothing. Since they had survived the period to January 1933, and since the policies then were still less than three years old, they were as worthless after the $51.48 was applied as they were when lapsed over a year before.

In 1933, when this transaction took place, the Met had a nice increase in assets—almost $100,000,000 over 1932. It also had paid nearly $140,000,000 in surrender values to its industrial policyholders; the Negro man's $51.48 made up a part of that total. Its premium receipts from its industrial policyholders that year were over $300,000,000, counting in this $51.48. The Negro's face was seen quite often at relief headquarters; he had five children, the Met had his money.

The case of Nealy (not his real name of course) is typical. In September 1933, he came to a private charity for help. Up to June 1930 he had been fairly steadily employed, and had been a pretty good patron of the Met. Out of work about that time, he was compelled to "lapse," stop paying on his nine industrial policies. At that time two of these policies were less than three years old, and at lapse were entirely worthless, giving no insurance protection at all; the others gave a limited amount of paid-up insurance.

In September 1932, the Met agent, driven (as are all agents) by his company for more business, more premiums, got in touch with Nealy and arranged, as a *concession* to him, to get the money on some of his lapsed policies and use it to reinstate such other of his lapsed policies as it pleased the company to revive and put in force. This is the declared purpose of PS-200, and we cannot now dispute it, al-

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though, since all the papers were signed in blank, it is scarcely likely that the Negro, or for that matter the agent, fully understood how the transaction would work out, except that the agent knew that neither he nor the Met would be the losers.

Well, PS-200 was signed, and it and all the nine lapsed policies were sent to the home office. Sure enough, the company found that six of the lapsed policies were worth slightly over $100 (savings balances, belonging to the policyholder). Nealy received not one penny of this $100! It all remained with the Met.

The Met home office—it cannot shift the responsibility to subordinates in a branch office—through a department regularly organized for the purpose first figured out the allowance of $100 due on six of the policies, and then applied all of it on the premiums on the two policies issued in November and December 1928, and the one old policy issued in March 1925. Of the total, $64 paid the past-due premiums from June 1930 to September 1932, although two of them gave *no protection whatever* in that period, and one gave only a small amount of paid-up insurance during the period of lapse.

Who do you think got the remaining $37? The Met of course—it just would not do for him to be without that good old Met (endowment) insurance, so the company kept these three policies in force for him (with his own money), prepaying the 55-cents-a-week premium on them from September 1932 to January 1934. This took all the $37, with 35 cents left over, which the Met held on to, to be credited later.

In one fell swoop the Met got three and a half years' premiums: over two years' payments on two policies which gave no protection at all for the back premiums paid, also one year's advance payments on endowment policies—from a family in need!

At that time, the charity to which Nealy had applied was turning away heartbreaking cases because it had no funds. In 1932, the year this transaction took place, the great Met increased its assets over $95,000,000.

Even more ready to fall for the blandishments of the Metropolitan agents are the hard-working, thrifty Italians: for some reason, possibly because the better savings banks are too reserved in their contacts, more likely because the Met employs a proper quota of Italians as agents (and even prints its industrial policies in Italian), the weekly-premium industrial policy seems to suit Italians. They fall for the endowment policy when earning good wages—and by the wayside, when times get slack.

Upstate lived the Pastore family, (again the name is fictitious). It was a good steady patron of the Met, buying and cashing—when ten years old—its endowment policies. Father and grown son evidently made good wages, when things were right in the prosperous industrial city in which they lived. They had as many as nineteen or twenty Metropolitan policies, this family of six. Their premiums totaled $6.60 a week, not an exceptionally large premium to be paid by such a family. Of course, when times got worse, employment uncertain, they couldn't pay all this, and the policies (most of them endowment or savings policies) lapsed. Many hundreds of dollars of the family's savings were tied up in these lapsed policies. They had lost their jobs, their home was taken over by the HOLC. They owed their doctor a sizable bill (another bambino had recently arrived); they owed on their furniture; the coal man had obtained a judgment of around $100 for his bill. In all, their larger creditors had over $700 coming to them, and no doubt the family owed the usual number of neighborhood storekeepers, which hard-up families will get credit from. It isn't difficult to figure out how they managed to get into debt as they did, with the Met coming around for its $6.60 every week. The family was getting its coal and milk from the relief authorities, and the father had a three-days-a-week job with the CWA.

Just how much the Pastores had tied up in its policies is uncertain, but it is safe to say that it was well above $1,000—probably much more. Whatever the amount, it seems to have been as good as lost, in a practical sense, to the family, as they probably believed the agent and the company, who in such circumstances tell the families that they have lost their insurance. Their home was to go, creditors were to remain unpaid, a CWA job was to give the family the money to live on.

But the Met still had their money—their thousand or more dollars. Now, the Met isn't just interested in lapsed policies, despite the fact that they account for a goodly part of its total assets. It grows on *new* premiums, and it wants and gets new premiums! What the Met craves is *both* assets and premiums! So it got after the Pastore family, much as it got after our other two friends, after tens of thousands of other innocent, trusting—always needy—American families. It trotted out its winner, good old PS-200, which has corralled for it many a lapsed policy, converting it into premiums so that the year's assets would be as large or even larger than for the previous year, with a commendable showing made on amounts paid policy holders.

The first PS-200 transaction with the Pastores took place in February 1932: the family then had twenty policies, most, if not all, lapsed for from three to nine months. So the agent took two of the more valuable of the lapsed policies and had the family sign the necessary PS-200 papers, and such other numerous documents as only industrial life insurance can conjure up; all were sent to 1 Madison Ave. Back came glorious news! As a concession, because of the *proven* dire need of the family (this was a prerequisite), the Met would allow $159 on these two presumably worthless policies: not in cash, for then the Met would actually be minus this amount. No, $140 of the sum realized was applied on delinquent premiums past due from various dates in May to December 1931, to different weeks in February and March 1932.

Again the old game was played. Most of this $140 was entirely wasted. Much of it went to pay on policies which gave no insurance protection whatever during the period of lapse, and were in full force for only a few weeks. This left $19, which the Met branch office had lying around (didn't know exactly what to do with it) until July of the same year (1932), when it spread it over the same policies which had previously been paid on by the $140. All this, of course, without consulting the family, still on relief.

The family was evidently easy pickings, and back came the Met a little later, in September 1932. The Pastores were still on relief; seventeen policies were left of the original twenty,

John Heliker

"Doctor, I'm a Republican. What is there in this idea of life beginning at '40?"

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all again lapsed, the now reduced weekly premium of $5.52 still beyond the ability of the family to keep up, although they had, goodness knows how, managed to pay this amount for some weeks after the policies had been revived by the $159 hypodermic.

So good old PS-200 again came to the rescue —of the Met. This time three of the again lapsed policies were turned in for cash surrender, and the not unimportant (to the family) sum of $199.65 allowed on them.

Again all—not just part of it—went to pay premiums. It was, however, much too large to be eaten up as before, too large just to pay delinquent premiums, or to pay the policies merely to date, so the great-hearted Met took out enough to prepay the premiums on the fourteen remaining policies to June 1933, just a little matter of from forty-three to fifty-two weeks' premiums paid in advance, this time at the reduced premium of $4.38 a week. The family was still in dire need.

We haven't told all yet. The Pastores still had fourteen policies left. The previous injection of $199.64 had increased the value of these policies, but, of course, by not nearly the same amount. The family again failed the Met. It was again derelict in its duty: it hadn't kept up its again reduced premiums of $4.38 a week, in fact hadn't paid anything at all after August 1933! So again, in February 1934, the fourteen remaining policies were handed over to the agent and company for a PS-200 operation. Two were found to be worth the trifling sum of $92 and this amount was allowed for their surrender. All of it—yes, all of it—was applied on the delinquent weekly premiums of $3.75 (on the remaining twelve policies) from August 1933 to February 1934, during which time at least three of the policies gave no protection whatever, so the family got absolutely nothing for what was paid on them.

Exactly $450.97 taken from a family on relief—in need, dire need—enough to keep them many a month! Italians are frugal and know how to stretch a dollar. At the windup in 1934 their remaining twelve policies were worth possibly $300, or just a little more than the same twelve were worth in February 1932. Nothing at all to show for the $450 obtained on the other eight except a few thousands of insurance protection for a year or two.

What happened to the family, whether there were more such transactions, we do not know. Did they manage to find work, did they keep up their reduced premiums of $3.75 a week? Did they manage to pay the doctor, the coal man, the furniture dealer, the kindly corner-storekeeper? Did they recover their home?

In New York City there was being pushed to the skies the magnificence of Radio City, financed by funds supplied by the Metropolitan. In the slums of Philadelphia, New York, of every industrial city in this country, live the undernourished, the ill-clad, who then and now contribute a billion dollars a year to the industrial insurance companies of this country.

Growth? Solidity? Profits?

Yes—but for whom?

Mexico's New Strength

Consolidating the Country's Economic Position

HU WILLIAMSON

Mexico City.

MEXICO is emerging from a period of severe economic distress which coincided with the slump in the United States and was vastly accelerated by the events leading up to and immediately following oil expropriation. In March, the oil corporations declared economic war on President Cárdenas by insisting on cash settlement of all accounts due and suddenly withdrawing their liquid capital from the country. This sudden transfer of funds imposed severe strains on the peso. Meanwhile panic-stricken native landlords and business groups resorted to a vast legal and illegal export of capital which reached approximately half a billion pesos in the year just ended. These events, coupled with a catastrophic drop in petroleum exports, forced a 36 percent depreciation of the currency in less than sixty days. Foreign business interests jubilantly looked forward to a spiral of inflation and currency depreciation which might have created the economic preconditions for military counter-revolution. The Mexican treasury, however, took vigorous measures. Imposition of a 12 percent export tax brought new blood to the budget and bank reserve. While Secretary Hull penned his sermons to the Mexicans, Secretary Morgenthau increased silver purchases. For these reasons, the flight from the currency has abated and the peso is gradually rising in terms of dollars.

President Cárdenas has consolidated the economic position of the country. The new government-owned oil corporation claims to have increased domestic consumption of petroleum by about 12 percent. Although exports are below normal, the oil trust is today breaking even, because the flow of capital to foreign shareholders and parent corporations in New York and the Hague has been stopped. While salaries have been increased only slightly, employment in the industry has risen. Unskilled field labor has been put to work draining malarial swamps, building better houses for the workers, constructing hospitals, and, in short, making the oil fields fit for human habitation.

The international oil boycott against Mexico is collapsing. August exports were close to pre-expropriation level, and since then Mexico has concluded important deals with Italy, Brazil, and a group of independents in the United States. Through a large barter transaction between Germany and Mexico, at present under discussion, the oil trust may modernize the entire refining industry of the nation. The intransigeant British and American trusts are at last awakening from their daydreams of an army-led counter-revolution, and there is reason to believe that they will open negotiations with the government in the next few months.

The worker-controlled National Railways of Mexico have also registered important gains. The short-term internal debt is being rapidly paid off; rolling stock rendered unserviceable during the revolution has been repaired; roadbeds have been reenforced; and payroll padders have been discharged. The trade union has launched a broad educational program for its members, involving the conversion of old boxcars into traveling schools for the children of the migratory construction and maintenance-of-way workers. Carloadings, however, are below normal because of the unsatisfactory economic condition of the country, and freight rates stand in need of systematic revision.

The collectivized Laguna region will meet all loan obligations to the federal government in 1938, since cotton production will be larger and the wheat crop will be worth 8,428,000 pesos as against 1,565,000 pesos last year. La Laguna will not face another year in which government loans were serviced by the dubious expedient of pegging internal cotton prices considerably above the world price.

The Yucatan henequen, or sisal hemp, zone has become a single collectivized farm with thirty thousand peasants and industrial workers. This year, hemp grades were improved about 50 percent; plantings were accelerated to offset years of sabotage by the big landlords; and a Code of Social Defense was enacted under which proprietors who destroy the agricultural wealth of the state, through slipshod production methods or deliberate wrecking activity, can be put behind prison bars. The Popular Front government of Yucatan is coping intelligently with the outstanding production problems. Stocks of henequen in the United States are, however, large; there are thirty-five competing production areas throughout the world; and international demand for binder twine is on the wane. These factors make it possible for International Harvester to discriminate for political reasons against the Mexican product, and there is evidence that it is doing so. Meanwhile the government laboratory is trying to manufacture cellulose and alcohol from the green-gray agave leaves, and economists are studying broad plans for the reorganization and diversification of Yucatan's agriculture.

Mr. Hull and the Land Tangle: The Hull-Najera agreement of November 12 provides for annual Mexican indemnity payments to United States landlords of $1,00,000, be-

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ginning next May. This sum will make quite a dent in the Mexican budget. It means suspension of vital health and educational work and slower progress in reducing the prodigious Mexican infantile mortality rate. At a recent Cabinet meeting here, the Mexican government decided that no expenditures could be made this year other than those which have been specifically authorized in the federal budget.

From the Mexican standpoint, the land agreement is somewhat of a blow at national prestige, since it accords rights to foreigners which are not enjoyed by Mexican citizens. The upshot will be that American lands will not be expropriated except where absolutely essential. Since land is expropriated in the neighborhood of those villages which petition for it and not in accordance with a broad national plan of land utilization, this will involve considerable inconvenience. As long as over half the land of the country is held by native landlords, however, it is obvious that the agrarian program can continue at any pace desired without affecting United States properties.

Mexico's greatest single economic problem is the persistent rise in food prices, a rise which has almost nullified the big wage increases won by organized labor. The Mexican Federation of Labor (CTM) claims that trade-union workers are better off today throughout the republic, largely because of the social services provided for in most of the recent collective contracts. The rapid rise in living costs bears down heavily on the unorganized workers in the small shops and cottage factories which form such an important part of Mexico's backward industries. On September 14, the National Bank of Mexico reported a 30 percent increase in the cost of living in a period of twelve months. This price advance is primarily due to the drop in agricultural production, though there are such contributory causes as widespread speculation by middlemen, discriminatory railroad rates in favor of car-lot shipments, and inadequate government credit facilities for the peasantry. Between 1901-07 and 1927-33, corn production fell 29.4 percent and bean production dropped 21.9 percent. From 1931 to 1936, corn output declined continuously, falling from 2,139,000 tons to 1,597,000 tons. These figures are all the more alarming in view of the fact that Mexico's population increased from 15,200,000 in 1910 to an estimated 18,500,000 in 1935.

The downward course of per-capita crop production is largely due to the slow pace of the agrarian reform and the primitive technique of the semi-cooperative farm. The agricultural revolution has been going on for twenty-three years, and the owners of the large estates (who are even today the most important factor in Mexican agriculture) have refused to institute permanent improvements, repair machinery, or replenish exhausted soils. Swift expropriation action, covering huge areas and in accordance with a national plan of land utilization, would solve the problem, but the government has neither the funds nor the trained men for such a venture; and it is determined not to resort to more drastic inflationary measures. The peasants on their new lands have shown a tendency to abandon crop specialization and grow corn even on soils unsuited for the national staple. Furthermore, the collective peasantry is eating more, and this means a diminished flow of foodstuffs to the market.

This problem can only be solved by rapid and resolute land expropriation and an increase in federal credit facilities for the semi-collective peasants. The government Bank of Ejidal Credit is not only loaning money, but also organizing efficient crop production on the new village lands. Meanwhile the government is establishing regulatory commissions in the chief cities which check profiteering in corn, rice, and beans by selling through special stores to the public at fixed prices. The rise in food prices is a symptom of the economic dislocation incident to every period of vast agrarian transition.

Organized Workers: This summer, the Mexican Federation of Labor (CTM) issued a statement to the effect that strikes would be restricted during the period of economic strain as a means of cooperating with the government. This pledge has been adhered to. With the railroads, the oil industry, and hundreds of factories throughout the country under worker or government control, the field for judicious strike action is obviously limited. For obvious reasons there have been few strikes in the mining industry.

Mexican labor has nonetheless registered important gains in the last few months. The organization of a Latin American Federation of Labor will aid in battering down the dictatorships, winning economic gains for the workers, and eventually building up continental industrial unions which will be able to challenge the power of such mammoth corporations as the American Smelting & Refining Co. from Montana to the southern Andes. At a great mass meeting sponsored by the CTM and the Party of the Mexican Revolution, labor launched an organization drive in the company-union stronghold of Monterrey. The labor federation has just announced that it will open trade-union food stores throughout the country which will sell necessities of life to the people at cost, and thus combat the high cost of living.

The CGT, a former anarchist trade-union federation now controlled by company-union elements, withdrew from the Party of the Mexican Revolution a few weeks ago, because it had no real voice in the party's affairs. This declaration of war against the government means that concerted efforts will be made by employer groups to build up the CGT to fight Cárdenas and institute a disguised company unionism.

As a result of President Cárdenas' personal efforts, the federal employees have won the right to organize into trade unions and strike. In a message to the new government workers' union, Cárdenas warned them not to affiliate with any other labor organization. This is manifestly a blow directed at the CTM, but it will not preclude close cooperation between the two labor bodies. Readers will remember that Cárdenas took action several years ago to stop CTM organization of the peasantry and insisted that the latter form a separate federation under the ægis of the official political party.

Informed groups explain Cárdenas' recent decision with reference to the government workers on two grounds: The president will not give any organized labor group even the theoretical power to paralyze the activities of the government by a general strike of its members. Should Cárdenas decide to take over the leadership of the Party of the Mexican Revolution on vacating the presidency, he will be able to serve as a balance wheel between the army and labor if he guides both the organized peasantry and the employees of the state.

Two disturbing events in recent weeks have been Cárdenas' decision to recall the progressive chief of military operations in Sonora when the latter clashed with right-wing Governor Ramon Yocupicio, the so-called Cedillo of the North; and the decree of November 1 which virtually excludes refugee immigration into the Mexican republic. This last action followed the decision of reputedly progressive Minister of the Interior Garcia Téllez to deport twenty-one German anti-fascist refugees. These would have been sent back to concentration camps had they not succeeded in obtaining temporary asylum in Cuba.

The Next President? With the miserable showing of Cedillo, the specter of an army

Hometown

It is no city, after all,
That spikes its gate and guards its wall:
It is no city wonderful,
It is not Constantinople.
Yet here as children we made news:

Survived, somehow, the ticket queues,
The transfer points, the Crime Club clues,
Outlived the streets' dynamic silence,
A weekend at the Thousand Islands,
And never found an opaque promise;

Reacted like birds to summer solstice,
Cured neuralgia with a poultice,
Unsexed the iron dog on the lawn,
Preferring, ultimately, brain to brawn,
Opened the hugest sluice and caught

Not the slightest finite thought;
Were told Don't Miss, Your Fathers Fought,
Your Own Backyard, O Dry Those Tears,
The Time is Ripe, The Management
Assures
Complete paralysis for years and years.

JOHN MALCOLM BRINNIN.

★ ★ ★

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revolt against Cárdenas seems to have been laid to rest for the time being. There is, however, a less spectacular and more real danger. The democratic machinery set up in the constitution of the Party of the Mexican Revolution is still largely on paper, and the presidential succession will be enormously influenced by the action of the one excellently organized group in Mexico. That group is not labor but the army. It is virtually certain that no trade-union leader can win the nomination of the official party; and it is the nomination, not the presidential election, which is decisive.

The most probable candidate for the presidency is Avila Camacho, secretary of war in the Cárdenas Cabinet. While the war minister has made many enemies in the army by his policy of ruthlessly cashiering potentially disloyal generals, he has wisely made these enemies impotent. The army will follow him, both because he has improved its organization and equipment and because many of the younger officers owe him their epaulets.

Like President Cárdenas before his showdown with Dictator Calles, Avila Comacho is more or less of a political enigma. The best information available is that he is in the conservative wing of the Cabinet, and will favor agrarian reform without giving organized labor much encouragement. Of the other candidates, Tapia is a man of the same stamp as the war minister; Communications Minister Francisco Mugica is distrusted because of his close friendship with Trotsky; while Castillo Najera, Mexican ambassador to Washington, is an able middle-of-the-roader with inadequate political and military support. Adalberto Tejeda is commonly believed to be a revolutionist, but his support is confined to the Ministry of Education, and he can be dismissed from consideration as a serious candidate.

Cárdenas has publicly stated that he will not run again, but he may be prevailed upon to do so if the national needs of the country demand it. The alternative is a dangerous dilemma. If Cárdenas should impose a straw candidate whom he could control, he would thereby strike a blow at Mexico's nascent democratic procedures. While such a course might salvage the revolutionary program, a weak president would fail to capture the imagination of the people and forge the degree of national unity essential if ambitious militarists are to be kept in their barracks. On the other hand, acquiescence in a straight army candidate might result in a six-year period of drift to the right, during which the basic achievements of the Cárdenas revolutionary renaissance would be whittled down and the economically castrated landlord groups would be given a series of breathing spells. Fortunately, the Mexican Federation of Labor has considerable influence in the councils of the Party of the Mexican Revolution. While unable to obtain the nomination of a civilian candidate, the CTM is probably powerful enough to throw the presidency to the most progressive of the army's favorite sons.

The Way a Son Should Be

A Short Story

LEN ZINBERG

"You're kind of early. School ain't over till nine-fifteen." He looked at his watch. "That's more than a half-hour away. That's why I asked you; the school boys don't come around till about nine, so I figured that maybe you was looking for a firm or something. The firms is all shut."

The young man said: "No, I'm just waiting for my girl. She goes to school."

"Yeah," the elevator operator said, his voice loud in the empty lobby. He was sitting on his small stool, his old face looking very white and pale in the strong light of the elevator. "There's lots of fellows that wait for the school girls, but they come later, about nine. Funny, ain't it, having a college on the top of a big office building?"

"It does seem strange. But it's very convenient."

"Sure thing. Most of the girls work during the day and come here right from business. I ain't kicking, it's easier running the car at night than at day. After the girls go home, there ain't nothing to do."

"I suppose so. Say," the young man said quickly, "is there a men's room here that I could use?" And he grinned slightly with embarrassment.

"Well now," the old man said slowly, "there is plenty of them in this building, but you see, outsiders—people that don't work here ain't supposed to use them. You see?"

"If it's any bother, why, I can wait."

The operator winked confidentially, his thin face wrinkling up. "I'll let you sneak into the one on the second floor. I guess you're all right."

The young man thanked him and stepped into the car and they went up to the second floor and the elevator operator pointed out the door and said that he would wait. The operator said to himself that here was certainly a fine young fellow. Looked like a real educated boy and yet didn't look like any sissy. You could bet he could handle himself, kind of stocky, the way a young fellow should be. Not like most of these little squirts that came around after the school girls; weak-looking punks, puffing on their pipes and talking loud and always airing their damn smartness. Always looked too smart-alec for young fellows. Now this boy, he looked like a regular guy, dressed nice and neat, not sloppy like the squirts. This sure was the kind of a boy that would get some place, the kind a girl ought to go out with. It would be nice to have a son like that, a man would want a son like this lad. Yes, a father would be glad to . . .

The door down the hall opened and the young man said: "Shall I turn off the lights?"

"No. Leave them on. It makes the place feel more cheerful."

They went back down to the main floor and the old man sat down on his stool and the young fellow pulled out a pack of cigarettes and they smoked. The young fellow said: "It's pretty quiet and peaceful here at night."

The operator shrugged his shoulders. "Kind of lonely, gives me the jitters sometimes. But the watchman comes on at eleven, and there's always the fireman and the scrubwomen about. I don't mind it, but this big building is dead as a cemetery at night."

"The whole business district is quiet, quiet and friendly. During the day the city is so hard and cold." The young man had a soft deep voice that pleased the old man. Most of the puffed-up squirts had shrill voices or high laughs, like young kids, or put on an over-deep voice, as if to prove that they were really men.

They were silent for a while and the old man picked up the paper and read and then he said: "I see where the Yanks won again."

"They have too much money behind them. They're so good, they spoil the sport."

"That's a fact, now. Say, they're going to match Louis and Baer. I bet that will be something. That Baer can punch."

The young man nodded. "But Louis will win. He's a great fighter."

"He's pretty good. But the papers spoiled him with all this wonder-fighter stuff when he first got started. He's no seventh wonder, none of them are."

The young man said that's right, and that they all go down when hit right.

"Sure," the elevator operator agreed. "And they say Baer is an old man. Old man, and him just over thirty! That ain't old."

"It all depends on what condition you keep yourself in."

"Damn right, you're only as old as you feel. Corbett and Fitz were going great guns when they was forty. Why, a man just reaches his prime when he hits forty. The way folks talk nowadays, a man over thirty-five might just as well be dead. I don't understand it, a man just begins to know how to live when he's about forty and settled down."

"Of course," the young man said without smiling at the old man.

There was another pause. "But Louis is good, there's no getting away from that. He

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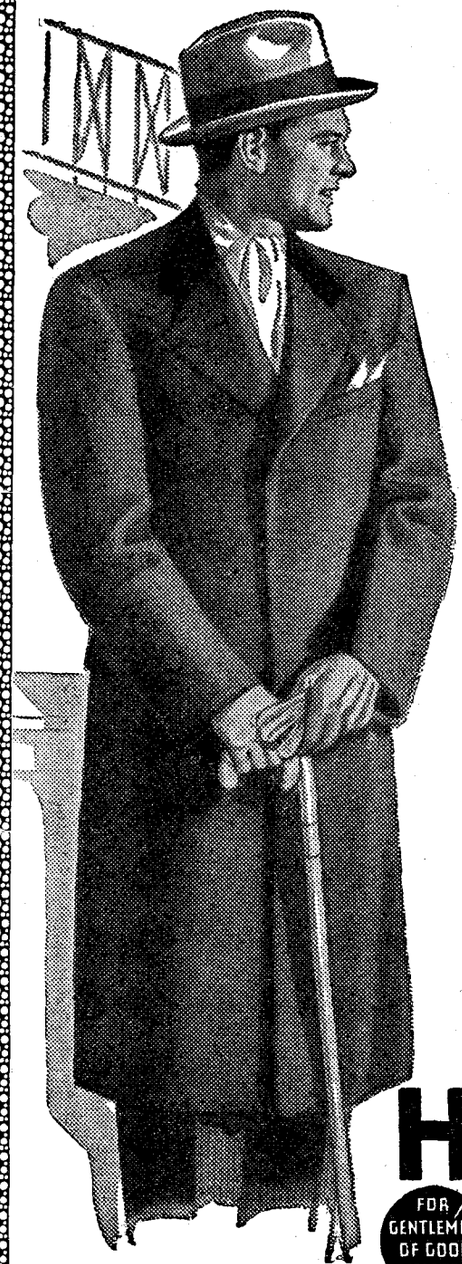

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might have beat Dempsey. You know who was a great fighter?"

"Jack Sharkey?" the young man said.

"When he was feeling like fighting!"

"Sure. He was the best of them all, when he wanted to be."

"Now ain't that funny?" the operator said, standing up and letting the paper fall. "You and me agreeing on Sharkey. I always said he was a great fighter, but everybody pans him. Believe me, he was some fighter. I seen him trim Maloney at the Stadium."

"He was good, when he was in the mood. I used to see him train at Stillman's."

"At Stillman's Gym? Say, are you a pug? You look beefy enough."

The young man laughed and said no. "I'm interested in boxing, and I watch them train at the gym. For a quarter you can see some of the best fighters in action."

"Well, say, that's a mighty smart thing," the old man said, full of admiration.

There was another silence and the old man thought that you could see that this boy had a smart level head on him, seeing all those fighters for two-bits. No sense in spending a couple of dollars for a ticket and being about a mile away. How many guys thought about going to a gym and seeing the whole lot of them for a quarter? This was a smart boy. And he knew things, like the way he understood about Sharkey being a great fighter. You could talk to this fellow, he wasn't like these strutting squirts that just said yes and no and walked away.

The young fellow bent down and picked up the paper. The old man watched him while he glanced at it. This was the way a son should be—smart, but quiet and husky and clean-cut. If you had a son like that, the both of you could meet after work and go over to a saloon and have a couple of glasses of beer and talk things over. And he wouldn't get loud-mouth or tight on a few beers. They would talk about things, and then go home and have a bite to eat and listen to the radio. And if they were in the saloon, and a drunk started any rough-house, the boy would say: "Take it easy, this is my dad," and handle him without any trouble. If the drunk got real tough, the boy would knock him down and say: "I told you that was my dad!" It would be good to have a son, a son like this boy.

The call bell began to ring and the three top-floor lights went on. The old man took a last puff and stepped on his cigarette. "School's over. Now watch the rush."

The young man folded the paper and carefully put it behind the stool, then he waved and stepped out of the car. A couple of young fellows were hanging around the big door at the end of the lobby.

As he stood ready to close the car door, the old man said: "Well, I'll be busy as the devil for the next twenty minutes. Drop around early again, when you got time. I like to talk to you. I can tell you about some of the oldtime fighters."

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"Thanks. I will."

"Sure. And if you ever want to use the men's room again, or want to wash up, just let me know."

"Okay. Thanks again," the young man said, smiling.

The bell buzzed frantically, the operator waved, shut the door, and the car went up. As the car shot up to the top floors, the old man was thinking over and over that here was a mighty fine young fellow.

The elevator went up and down, emptying its load of chattering girls and young women. The young fellow was leaning against the wall, waiting for his girl, and each time before he went up, the old man waited a bit, to see which one was the boy's girl.

Then, as the girls came rushing out of the car, he saw the young man suddenly straighten up and smile at one of them. He walked towards a tall blonde girl, a very pretty girl, and the old man thought that that was the way it should be—the best-looking girl for a fine boy like him. The blonde was a beautiful girl, he had often noticed her before. No punks for her, but a real fellow. And she was a lucky young lady, too.

As he was about to shut the door, he saw the young man come up to the blonde, a broad smile on his face, walk past the blonde and take the arm of a young Negro girl. The black girl smiled and squeezed his white hand, and they walked out arm in arm; talking in the careless manner of intimate people.

The old man stared at them, mouth open—bewildered, while the bells buzzed loudly. Then he slammed the door shut and said aloud: "Why, the son of a bitch! And I did him a favor and let him use the men's room!"

★

A Catholic on Dies

MR. DIES, it seems, has been fooling himself into believing that it is perfectly safe to make any charges, unsupported by any proof, without any fear of any reply from injured parties. . . . Consequently, when Mr. [Paul Y.] Anderson said: "I'm going to talk back to you," Mr. Dies became panicky and began to lay down against Anderson and others a barrage of charges which make the laughable one about Shirley Temple seem sober by comparison. What is the matter with Mr. Dies and his stooges and his "free" press agents in the tory press? Are they of the opinion that Governor Murphy should have met the situation as Hoover met the bonus marchers, by shooting first and investigating later? Most Americans are agreed that Governor Murphy's way was the better way in spite of the lying assaults of his enemies and the enemies of the laboring man and the common people. . . .

It is becoming increasingly evident that the Dies committee is merely a reincarnation of the defunct Liberty League.—JAMES B. COONEY, *the "New World," official organ of the Archdiocese of Chicago.*

Readers' Forum

"Creating Money"

TO NEW MASSES: Last week's issue of NEW MASSES carried John Strachey's "Is There Hope in America?" which raised certain questions concerning my review of his latest book, *Hope in America.* Mr. Strachey writes, "As I read Minton's review, I was struck by a certain disproportion between the strength of his dislike of my book and the criticisms he was making of it."

Mr. Strachey feels that the review took issue with inconsequential details. I don't think so. And to answer Mr. Strachey's objections as briefly as possible, I would like to recall a few of my criticisms:

1. I did not, as Mr. Strachey feels, object that his book was not the equal of pamphlets by Paine, Marx, and Lenin. What I did say was that these writers had solved the problem of writing simply, whereas "the difficulties of analyzing the intricacies of the American scene in the short space at Strachey's disposal and in the language of his special audience have beguiled Strachey into generalizations which at times amount to vulgarizations." In other words, Strachey's explanations are in certain places oversimple and, as such, false.

2. I did object to the sub-head "America Is Anti-Imperialist" and I am glad that Mr. Strachey agrees with the criticism. But I went on to show that in the text "there is a failure to differentiate between the desires of the American people and the working of monopoly capitalism in the United States." Mr. Strachey's incomplete definition of imperialism led him to misinterpret the American scene, to state, "America seems to have turned her back on the imperialist road." It is a basic misconception of the nature of American capitalism to consider imperialism a strategy or a form that can be adopted or discarded at will. Lenin has stated:

> "If it were necessary to give the briefest possible definition of imperialism, we should have to say that imperialism is the monopoly stage of capitalism. . . . Imperialism is capitalism in that stage of development in which the domination of monopolies and finance capital has taken shape; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world by the international trusts has begun, and in which the partition of all the territory of the earth by the greatest capitalist countries has been completed." *(Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism.* Chapter VII.)

3. I objected to Mr. Strachey's statement that America "seems to have her feet planted more or less firmly upon the road which leads to solving the problem by means of making her own population the ultimate market for her goods," and remarked that the last phrase was an obvious distortion. Mr. Strachey challenges that. There can be no argument that under Socialism the goal will be similar to that outlined by Mr. Strachey. But in the highly developed capitalist state of America, in a period of decline and crisis, such a goal is contradictory to the very nature of monopoly capitalism, as Mr. Strachey has pointed out in previous books. Therefore, it seems to me an obvious distortion to talk about the "road" capitalist America is taking, when to take such a road is clearly out of the question—even though certain temporary administration maneuvers may give Strachey the illusion that America is trying to make her population the ultimate market for her goods.

4. Mr. Strachey states, "The New Deal is not, as Minton, I see, supposes, 'a measure of protection against the decline of the capitalist system.'" But I really don't suppose anything of the kind! What I wrote was clear enough: "Roosevelt's program is based *on the belief* that capitalism can be preserved by granting certain important concessions to the masses. . . . The New Deal is likewise advantageous to *those capitalists who see in it* a measure of protection against the decline of the system." [My italics—B.M.]

5. I am not opposed to the Townsend plan or the California $30-Every-Thursday proposal because I object to distributing greater purchasing power to the masses. The support that the Townsend and other such plans have received shows the desire of a great section of Americans for old-age security. I am opposed to the Townsend plan and other such schemes only because they would finance old-age pensions at the expense of the masses and not at the expense of the capitalist class. What I really favor is the Communist Party's program for the extension of social security legislation.

6. Mr. Strachey takes the occasion of his disagreement with my review to advance an elaborate monetary scheme. Currency manipulations have often been advanced in the past as cure-alls, and Mr. Strachey has shown their fallacies very well in the first chapters of *The Nature of Capitalist Crisis.* Certainly, every progressive desires an expansion of social security benefits and of WPA. But the cost must be borne by the capitalists through taxation, and not by the masses through inflation. For Mr. Strachey's new scheme is really nothing more than the old plea for inflation. That controlled inflation can benefit certain classes up to a point is undoubted. That uncontrolled inflation is eventually paid for by the workers, farmers, and the middle classes is also true. The reckoning is invariably tragic. Mr. Strachey omits any discussion as to what happens to the price structure, what is the cost to the various classes. William Z. Foster, in his article, "Panacea Mass Movements" (the *Communist,* November 1938) dealing with such formulas—which article should be read together with the resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party (Workers Library Publishers, 1936, pp. 10-11)—writes: " . . . while the land and great industries remain in the hands of private owners, the latter through raising prices, lowering wages, etc., [are able] to cancel out, largely if not wholly, the increased mass purchasing power. . . . "

BRUCE MINTON.

TO NEW MASSES: While reading Strachey's answer to Bruce Minton's review of *Hope in America,* one is almost tempted to agree that by expanding his "germ" he has lost the "good idea" it contained. It is still true, however, that the basis of the idea is to give the impoverished workers, farmers, and lower middle class a sense of security and a decent standard of living. This is most certainly good, and no one who reads NEW MASSES will disagree. As Strachey himself says, the problem is how to accomplish this good. In discussing this problem, he reveals several fallacies in his argument which arise essentially from his confusion on the question: what is value, and what is money?

Strachey says, "Value is reckoned by hours of socially necessary labor time; anything which puts men on to socially necessary labor will create new

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values." Just before this he had said, "Money is work; money is objectified socially necessary labor time." It is just here that Strachey goes wrong. Money *represents* socially necessary labor time. It is wrong to say money *is* socially necessary labor time.

A dollar is a dollar, and exchanges as such, only because it *represents* a certain quantity of gold. What that quantity of gold is, is determined by government action. Before 1933 a dollar represented about one-twentieth of an ounce of gold. By decreeing that gold should sell at $35 an ounce, Roosevelt in actual fact decreed that from then on the American dollar no longer would represent one-twentieth of an ounce of gold, but one-thirty-fifth of an ounce of gold. He did not change the *value* of gold one iota. What he changed was its *price*. Since all other prices are related, through the dollar, to gold, by lowering the value of the dollar he raised other prices.

The money borrowed from the bankers today represents values already created. The government takes these values—machinery, raw materials, etc. —and puts WPA workers to work on them, creating new values. We agree that it is wrong to pay the bankers interest for the use of these values. The government should take them, through taxation.

By issuing money, however, the government cannot create any new values. The values in existence remain in existence. Not one single unit of new value is created by issuing more money. What happens is that the larger quantity of money is made to represent the same quantity of existing values. The only way for society to adjust to that situation is to raise prices. Marx explains it very clearly in *Critique of Political Economy:*

"If fourteen million pounds sterling were the quantity of gold required for the circulation of commodities and if the state were to put into circulation 210,000,000 bills each of the denomination of one pound, then these 210,000,000 would become the representatives of gold to the amount of fourteen million pounds sterling. It would be the same as if the state were to make the one-pound bills represent a fifteen times less valuable metal or a fifteen times smaller weight of gold. Nothing would be changed but the nomenclature of the standard of price. . . ."

The NEW MASSES editorial has already pointed out that the monopolies use this as an excuse to raise prices *higher* than the inflation itself justifies. These extra values seized by the monopolies can be taken only from the incomes of the workers, farmers, and lower middle class. It is possible, as Germany has illustrated, that a fully employed working class could have a lower standard of living even than at present, when large sections of the working class are unemployed and on relief.

Strachey is reasoning incorrectly, therefore, when he says, "The final effect of the creation of new money when substantial factors of production are idle is redistributive. There is no difference in principle between such creation and the transfer of the purchasing power of the rich to the poor by redistributory taxation."

There is absolutely no way whereby inflation can be made to benefit the lower sections of the population. Even the People's Front of Blum's day had to counteract the natural effects of the inflation made necessary by the sabotage of the 200 families, with special laws establishing higher minimum wages and guaranteeing a certain income to the small rentier.

Strachey is making a serious political error in his denial that the New Deal is a "measure of protection against the decline of the capitalist system." It may be impossible to make capitalism work by giving employment along New Deal lines. He knows it, and so do we, but that doesn't prevent a section of the capitalist class from *trying*. Strachey makes the same mistake here that Boudin made recently, that of considering the capitalist class as a *unit*. The capitalist class is made up of many diverse elements. The contradictions *within* this class are as glaring as those between it and the working class. This is so true that Stalin speaks of the contradictions within the capitalist class as an "indirect ally" of the working class.

It is on this that our whole People's Front policy is based. One section of the capitalist class sees no way to protect itself save fascism. But capitalism was originally based on freedom—freedom of trade, freedom of contract—finding its political expression in bourgeois democracy. A large section of the capitalist class, recruited primarily from those not yet included in the ranks of the finance-capitalists, still look toward democratic methods to save capitalism. It is the task of all progressives to utilize this division for the strengthening and extension of existing democratic rights. To fail to see the disunity of the capitalist class is, in the long run, to fail to see the possibility of the success of the People's Front.

Briefly, then, the solution for the workers, farmers, and middle class cannot be found through any scheme which involves issuing more money. Only the appropriation of moneys, values, already in existence, for the purpose of creating the additional values needed by the masses of the people can alleviate their poverty and insecurity. This can be done by a plan for taxing the financial oligarchy, summarized in the slogan of the Communists, "Make the rich pay."

BEATRICE BLOSSER.

New York City.

TO NEW MASSES: You raise two vital issues in your editorial note on my article in last week's issue. We must get agreement on these two points of fact if the controversy on the creation of money, as I call it, or inflation, as you call it (there is certainly the devil of a lot in a name, in this case), is to be fruitful.

First Point. Of course the creation of new money, either by the government or, as is more usual under capitalism, by the banks, tends to raise prices, or to prevent them falling, other things being equal. Hence you are perfectly right in saying that it tends, other things being equal, to depress the real wages of the employed workers.

Does it therefore follow that we should be against it in all circumstances? It is natural to assume so, and I certainly used to do so myself, as you do now. But take this case. During the down swing of a depression, as in 1929-33, or during 1937-38, prices are dropping, and therefore real wages, other things being equal, are being pushed up. Does it follow, therefore, that you are in favor of depressions and against such policies as the present "lend-spend" program of the Roosevelt administration; a program which is undoubtedly tending, first, to stop the fall in prices (and so to stop the rise in real wages) and then to push prices up again? No, you have all, quite rightly in my opinion, supported this program, in spite of the fact that its tendency is undoubtedly towards, amongst other things, reducing the real wages of the employed workers. *And you have done so because you know perfectly well that other things are not equal; that if depression, in spite of it causing prices to fall, and its consequent tendency to raise real wages, is allowed to go on, the working class will lose far more than it gains.* The workers will lose first and foremost by the catastrophic consequence of anything up to a half of them losing their jobs. And they will also lose because they will be forced to work short time, and because cuts in money wage rates will be imposed, which, in conditions of mass unemployment, their trade unions will be too weak to resist.

For all these irresistible reasons you support spending programs such as that of the Roosevelt administration, in spite of the fact that, if other things were equal, which they are not, government spending, like any other spending, would tend to raise prices and so reduce real wages.

All this does not mean that government spending cannot easily be overdone; that it could not cause, though in American conditions of extreme productivity of labor this would be quite difficult to accomplish, a runaway rise in prices which would bring as terrible suffering to the workers as does a depression itself; nor is it to say that the method and objective of government spending is not of vast importance. But all that should be common ground between us.

Second Point. Is it, or is it not, agreed that the effect upon prices, and so on real wages, of government spending of borrowed money and of government spending of newly created money, is the same? If, for instance, the present administration borrows a billion dollars from the American *rentier* class at 2 percent and pays that money to the American workers by means of WPA wages, or through old-age pensions, it will tend to raise prices, or to prevent prices falling, no more and no less, than if the government gives itself a credit of a billion dollars at a zero rate of interest (creates the money, that is to say) and pays it out through WPA wages?

The only difference is that on the first transaction the government has to pay a fee of $20,000,000 a year to the very richest class of American citizens, who, either individually or corporately, claim a monopoly right in the disposition of the liquid money—capital of the country. This fee has to be paid them in order that the government should get their permission to employ (or to pension) so many million American workers.

I repeat that I am not denying that for what might be called psycho-political reasons, and in the existing relationship of class forces in America, it may be necessary to pay this fee. It may even be wise for the American working-class movement to acquiesce in the payment of this fee. Of that I am not in a position to judge. But it really does seem curious when the most militant and advanced section of the American working-class movement actually insists on this fee being paid. For that is precisely what we do when we support a spending program so long as it is financed by borrowing, but oppose it when it is financed by the creation of money.

JOHN STRACHEY.

NEW MASSES believes that Mr. Strachey is vulnerable on both the points he makes. Since the problems he raises are, however, too complex to be dealt with briefly, we are having a full-length article prepared which will be published in an early issue.—THE EDITORS.

To Help Japan?

TO NEW MASSES: American capital is getting ready to support Japan in its attempt to conquer China in return for some of the loot. *Business Week*, that weekly adviser of big business, says in its October 22 issue:

"Is it time for diplomats and executives to revise their thinking on policy in the Pacific? Must they spend all their energies trying to brake the growing power of the new rival in the Orient? Or will they profit more if they work toward a plan, acceptable to them and to Japan, for mutually profitable cooperation?"

Ostensibly phrased in terms of objective inquiry, the language used in phrasing the alternatives suggests: (1) that attempts to "brake the growing power" of Japan involve the expenditure of "all their energies" on the part of executives and diplomats without certain profitable results, and (2) that an acceptable plan mutually satisfactory to both American and Japanese capital is possible without the expenditure of much effort and with certain profitable results to both.

J. J. LEGRIS.

New York City.

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REVIEW AND COMMENT

William Carlos Williams

DR. WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS has pictured in his prose sketches of the proletariat a people who by virtue of struggle are strong. The poor, he indicates, shall endure because they have endured despite all our cultural exploitation of them. He does not pity them or identify himself falsely with them; he presents them realistically, as they are—the fittest among us to survive. All of his prose stories prove the enormous vitality of the laboring class among whom he has moved as a physician. Obviously his feeling for his poverty-stricken patients is one of great respect, and his ability to laugh at them occasionally, and to like them despite the way in which they disobey his orders, shows that he sees in them, violently expressed, the will to live.

The poetry of William Carlos Williams, hitherto published chiefly in private or expensive editions, appears in this volume (*The Complete Collected Poems, 1906-1938.* New Directions Press. $3.) as a very important body of revolutionary thought. And, undeniably, Williams is one of the finest of our poets. Through discipline of form and selection of contents he chooses to set forth his pictures of the people as they are—not idealized, not pitied, but shrewdly observed. This book makes clear that Williams began as an imagist, influenced by Ezra Pound, but that he very shortly deserted literary language and nostalgias for the past, to record precisely the American scene he knew best—northern New Jersey, its country and its cities with their slums. Some of the earlier poems hint that at first he felt a separation between the artist and society. The last poems (and particularly the beautiful "The Wanderer") prove that, for this poet finally, there is a whole esthetic experience to be found in the artist's identification with the people. As this book progresses the reader will note that the language changes away from any literary influences to a pure American idiom, a common language, that the subjects which incite the poet to write grow more emphatically those of everyday life among an everyday people. And in these poems, as in Williams' prose, are pictures of ignorance and disease, with the awareness that the poor who suffer from these are our most violent agents toward social change. Our effete aristocracy of wealth may show a will to self-destruction; not so, our common people.

Dr. Williams has had the ability to combine his avocation with his vocation. He can identify and fuse personal experience and social, as a doctor, poet, and critic of society.

> O river of my heart polluted
> and defamed I have compared you
> to that other lying in
> the red November grass
> beginning to be cleaned now
> from factory pollution

His rhythms are bent always to clarify the picture or mood he presents. With free verse he does anything he pleases, for his precision in fitting phrasing to a line which, in its rhythm, carries the emotion is exceptional. His verse is dynamic, representing things seen in quick motion, quick change of mood, reacting to each other always. He is not often the lyric singer and almost never the purely subjective poet intent upon his own mood and its significance.

> What wind and sun of children stamping the snow
> Stamping the snow and screaming drunkenly
> The actually, florid detail of cheap carpet
> amazingly upon the floor and paid for
> as no portrait ever was—Canary singing
> and geraniums in tin cans spreading their leaves
> reflecting red upon the frost—
> They are the divisions and imbalances
> of his whole concept, made small by pity
> and desire, they are—no ideas beside the facts—

Rather, as here, his personal emotion is reflected only through the objects he observes and their social significance.

In the last poem in this book (a kind of hymn to his phoenix, to the bird of poetic imagination) Williams analyzes his muse and describes his own poetic growth. This poem, "The Wanderer," in which, quite appropriately, the phoenix or the ideal of creative beauty is called first "a young crow," we hear the poet ask, "How shall I be a mirror to this modernity?" and, in pursuit of his own creative purpose, we watch him learn to accept the society of which he is a part. In the section entitled "Paterson—The Strike" we note that the poet in the final quest of ultimate beauty discovers the worth of a class-conscious people:

> A short breadline before a hitherto empty tea shop:
> No questions—all stood patiently,
> Dominated by one idea; something
> That carried them as they are always wanting to be carried,
> "But what is it," I asked those nearest me
> "This thing heretofore unobtainable
> That they seem so clever to put on now!"

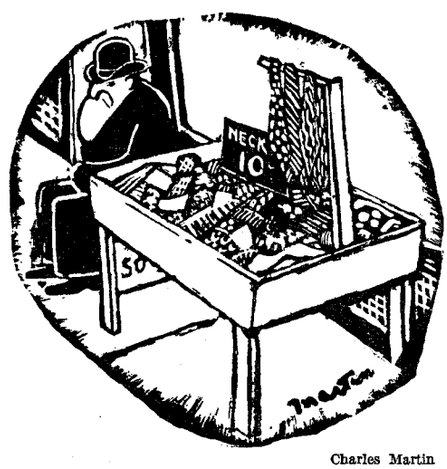
The poet questioning his own part in this picture of struggle continues:

> Why since I have failed them can it be anything but their own brood?
> Can it be anything but brutality?
> On that at least they're united! That at least
> Is their bean soup, their calm bread and a few luxuries

and a little further on:

> Faces all knotted up like burls on oaks,
> Gasping, fox-snouted, thick-lipped
> Sagging breasts and protruding stomachs,
> Rasping voices, filthy habits with the hands.
> Nowhere you! Everywhere the electric!
>
> Ugly, venomous, gigantic!
> Tossing me as a great father his helpless
> Infant till it shriek with ecstasy
> And its eyes roll and its tongue hangs out!—
>
> I am at peace again, old queen, I listen clearer now.

Coming thus to grips with life, the poet accepts his art for what it is, an interpretation of the social scene today and of a people whose fight for bread is "electric" in power. The poem ends with symbols of a kind of submergence into the Passaic River along which are the slums Williams knows so well, with a modern purification rite in which the poet's "ego" is washed away and his creative purpose grows young again through a desire to explain "the vile and the rotten" in terms of a beauty possible to the human spirit as it furthers true progress scientifically and socially.



Charles Martin

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A great deal more might be said of the technique of Williams' poetry. Moving from the imagist definition of poetry as objective description to explain mood, Williams shortly began to work in blocks of images, in one picture as opposed to another, and finally in a flow of imagery, in great condensation. Using free verse, he worked toward presenting through it impressions in contrast, fitting the phrase or line to the typographical line so that the reader's eye took in the charged and rhythmical mood of the poet. No one has greater talent for using ordinary language freshly through making it function within the sentence or in representation of the picture. Every word in a sentence or stanza of Williams' often seems born anew. Never, after his short apprenticeship, did Williams resort to the use of literary image or phrase.

But more important than all this, it seems to me, is the fact that Dr. Williams is a modern poet in the sense that few of his generation are modern: he finds his existence as a poet to be bound up with his existence as a man in society and to explaining the sanction of progress, even by suffering and violence. He spends no time satirizing corruption, no time pitying the poor; he is concerned with human dignity and with the dynamic force of a rising class. As an artist, therefore, with the proud humility of one who recognizes the only activating group among us, Williams gives himself over (even as he would give his services as a doctor) to a realistic and scientific identification with a people.

EDA LOU WALTON.

The Press versus the People

LORDS OF THE PRESS, *by George Seldes. Julian Messner. $3.*

IN THE recent elections, wherever the Republican reaction made gains theirs was a triumph of demagogy and deception, not of a direct attack on the New Deal and progress. In this triumph the press played a vital role, but mass disillusionment with the press was not blown away. According to the *Daily Worker,* the press of Pennsylvania was 93 percent Republican; yet the Republican victories were by small margins which could have been overcome with greater unity of labor and more consistent work among the farmers. In other words, the phenomenon that was so striking in 1936, that the masses voted *against* the dictates of the anti-New Deal press, is still with us. This mass criticism that manifests itself, not by a loss in its circulation, but by a decline in its influence, is aided, of course, by those individual critics who have conducted a partisan, guerrilla warfare against the corruption of the capitalist newspapers. One of the most hard-working and incisive of these critics is George Seldes; since 1934 we have had his *Freedom of the Press, You Can't Print That,* a chapter on the press in *You Can't Do That,* and now *Lords of the Press,* packed with social facts, vivid, and convincing.

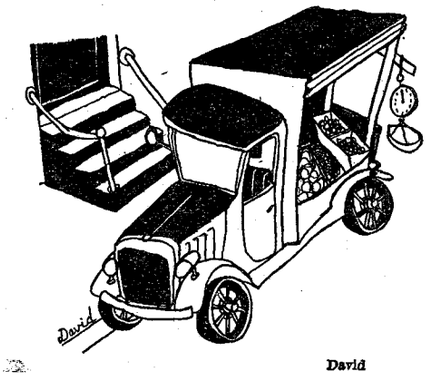
Seldes turns the penetration of an experienced and socially conscious newspaperman upon the press parade and shows us the main figures, usually in revolting dishabille. Here we find the familiar ugliness of Hearst and the savage faces of McCormick of the Chicago *Tribune,* Chandler of the Los Angeles *Times,* Annenberg of the Philadelphia *Inquirer,* Dewart of the New York *Sun,* Paul Block, and Frank Gannett. And in their company we see the Roy Howards, the David Sterns, the Sulzbergers, and the Abraham Cahans; we pay tribute to William Allen White of Emporia, press commoner; we read scathing pages on George Sokolsky, agent of the National Manufacturers Association, and shrewd and contemptuous ones on Walter Lippmann; we are offered, finally, serious proposals for a program of action. These are the highlights of an informative and stimulating survey.

Among the best chapters are those on Roy Howard and a couple on the New York *Times.* Seldes warns us that we "should no longer fool ourselves by counting among the liberal and progressive forces in America the entire Howard outfit. . . . Roy Howard has begun to follow Hearst in Red-baiting and labor-baiting. . . . The Stolberg series marked the emergence of Howard as one of the leaders in the anti-labor movement in America. . . ." With adequate documentation, and using only a portion of the available material, Seldes traces Howard's development from a liberal under the influence of Scripps to a big business exponent who hires M. H. Aylesworth of the Morgan entourage to edit his New York *World-Telegram.*

With all *due* respect for the *Times,* Seldes believes "the New York *Times* is not good enough," and writes an effective critical essay to support his contention:

> I know of no big newspaper in America which has so bad and consistent a record in opposing investigations. . . . It is a reactionary newspaper. Moreover, it is at times even worse than reactionary. At times it is obscurantist. . . . To be liberal a newspaper need not be the enemy of big business but it must at least be free to criticize. The *Times* has never attempted that. It takes the part of attorney for big business. . . .

This analysis is valuable especially because the *Times* is so much superior to the other reactionary papers. More such criticism is needed, for it tends to prove the most important of all points about the capitalist press, namely, that it is a *capitalist* press and *therefore* cannot afford to rise above its source of income and its class interests.



David

Seldes' treatment of David Stern, while recognizing Stern's defection from the path of consistent progressiveism, does not, it seems to me, go far enough. Seldes is generally sound when he describes "the Stern policy of operating as liberal a newspaper as the money interests will allow." He also notes that "sometime in 1937, however, a change seemed to come over the liberal viewpoint of the New York *Post,*" and it started Red-baiting, Soviet-baiting, and labor-baiting. But he pays insufficient attention to the *Post's* labor policy, which is defined if not entirely directed by the Socialist Levinson, and which has aroused the hatred of large sections of New York labor because of its Red-baiting attacks on many unions, notably those in the food, painting, and marine industries. An analysis of the *factional* labor policies of the *Post* is sorely needed; Levinson, it might turn out, is not far removed from Stolberg.

In looking for proposed remedies, Seldes turns first to the American Newspaper Guild, to which the volume is dedicated. Here his words ring with new pride, for the guild, he says, "has led the American newspaper workers out of the red-light district of journalism and into the green pastures of human dignity." The guild is undoubtedly, in its very being, a vital instrument of criticism of the press. The guild is providing newspapermen with the personal experience that is so invaluable to the growth of a social consciousness; the newspaperman cannot so easily identify his interests with those of his boss when he is organizing, striking, or picketing against him. The guild, we know, insists that it does not seek "editorial control" over the newspapers, although Seldes regrets that forbearance. Mistakenly believing that "doctors run hospitals and lawyers run courts" under capitalism, Seldes projects a kind of syndicalist mirage in which newspapermen would run the papers that big business *owns.* But just as Scandinavian marine workers refuse to sail scrap iron to Franco, and just as the *printers* on Hearst's Seattle *Post-Intelligencer* refused to print a lynch-inciting editorial on the Centralia case, so it is conceivable that guildsmen will at some time refuse to write what they *know* to be untruthful. Surely truth must become a limitation of the owner's freedom to lie.

Among his other proposals are that Congress should investigate the press (a splendid idea!), that newspaper readers "must never tire of protesting" against distortion and suppression of news, and, most fundamental, that labor must organize its own daily press. "The existence of labor newspapers would raise the standards of all newspapers. A labor newspaper would be for journalism what the TVA yardstick is for electricity." And in certain sections, it seems to me, labor is in a position to rise to this responsibility and opportunity. The

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Daily Worker, Midwest Daily Record, and San Francisco *People's World* have, in their limited way, done much to expose and occasionally forestall the depredations of the press. But the trade-union movement, by establishing daily papers in, let us say, New York and San Francisco, would be fulfilling its end of unifying all progressive forces in the battle against open and demagogic reaction. The labor movement alone can raise the money necessary to provide papers that would reach the millions with the truth about the news.

Meanwhile, Seldes deserves our thanks, and our study.

MORRIS U. SCHAPPES.

Three-Penny Opera

A PENNY FOR THE POOR, *by Bertolt Brecht. Hillman-Curl, Inc. $2.50.*

YEARS before the World War the cries of the wounded, the insulted, and injured could be heard in the literature of Western Europe. The open split between the individual and society took the form, in the novel and poetry, of a battle in the disguise of symbols; the images of psychological disorder reflected solitary man's defeats and desperation. For the symbolists, their own personalities became besieged and demoralized cities whose inhabitants—fearful ideas, memories, sensations—turned upon and fought one another.

It is easy to see, for example, how the Dane, Jens Peter Jacobsen, exercised so strong an influence on German literature. Phrases such as "Boiled crabs on a platter remind me of the massacre of the innocents in Bethlehem" fit naturally into a consciousness which, like Rilke's or Kafka's, was obsessed with the nightmare aspects of streets, law courts, and hotels peopled with savage, subhuman creatures.

But the living human being could not exist here. His place was taken by an abstract sequence of hallucinations, animated metaphors, the sights and sounds of cities invested with bodies, terrible dreams to which a sleeper was supplied for convention's sake.

It was Brecht's distinction that he led the attempt to restore the objective fact to German literature. His revolutionary mind worked like a broom, sweeping out the fantasies to make way for the stocks and bonds, the business deals and marriages, and the ceremonious murders which are the pillars of contemporary order. In this novel, of which the popular play and film *Drei Groschen Oper* are somewhat altered dramatizations, he has taken London during the Boer War as the scene of operations. Instead of houses with exposed entrails, metal disks that pursue a man, warning him of his approaching collapse, and hairy spiders who live in small rooms at home when they can no longer hold their bank jobs, we have the one-legged veteran, Fewkoombey, hanged for the murder which he *didn't* happen to commit; Peachum, chief of the begging racket and engineer of

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the sale of rotten transport ships to the Admiralty; Coax, whose career can be described in a two-word jingle, "Treachery, Lechery"; MacHeath, a genius who builds his retail-store business upon the wholesale robbery of warehouses; Polly Peachum, who loves her husband dearly, but will sleep with anyone for a nice brooch; and the independent shopkeepers who are privileged to live in rat holes and cough their lungs away at their own free will, praising God and Good Old Mac. In this slaughterhouse—which is England or Germany, or any capitalist country—all the butchers throw cleavers at one another, but that does not keep them from slitting the throats of any sheep that come their way.

Brecht did not, therefore, seek to lessen the horrors of contemporary society. But he transferred them from the plane of illusion to that of everyday and wide-awake existence. His fine social irony penetrated, like emery dust, the mechanism of business transactions. The wheels stop, and we see the parts arrested in their stamping and grinding functions. State, business, and underworld come to a standstill before the reader.

For his purpose, Brecht develops a kind of two-dimensional recital of events, for which psychology is employed only when it is necessary for consistency and credibility. The characters are cut out of whole cloth; that which they are at the beginning determines what they will do throughout the tale.

This method of exposition—by which the intelligence, grasping the laws of social action, replaces the imaginative recreation of reality—has certain inherent limitations. Brecht has given us a natural history of capitalist society. The social life of the business world parades its golden gardeners, Peachum and Coax, and its praying mantis, MacHeath. But, just as among insects, their fixed nature holds for all the individuals of their species. They are types whose character is predetermined by their position in society and does not grow or change, except as their species in general does. Our interest in them is generated by their methods of operation, their successes and failures within the system of adventures which the bourgeois calls civilization. Still, Brecht has no more gotten away from abstraction than his predecessors. For their pattern of symbols and associations, he has substituted a pattern of events and single-plane actions which are really deducible from the analysis of society and of the types engaged in action. They do not arise out of life, but out of a fixed conception of it. They do not spring from the clash of the world views of different people with objective circumstances, but out of the world view of the author alone, applied to circumstances and specimens of humanity. The aphoristic soliloquies in which the characters express their views are brilliant social exposés, but their generality dissipates their intensity and depersonalizes the victims and scoundrels who utter them. Brecht's scheme, however intricately and fascinatingly it is developed, still remains a scheme, chained to the laws of consistency, and to that extent deficient in reality.

Yet Brecht, like any master, transcends the limits of his own method, by his range of wit and broad comedy, his knowledge of the concrete forms which the struggle within and between classes takes, and by his deep vision of human suffering. Between the burgling of the international crime-prevention exposition, from which MacHeath wants to steal only British tools, for patriotism's sake, and the dream of the police inspector, Brown, who sees the legions of misery rising out of the Thames and advancing "in soundless march, transparent and featureless, marching through the walls, into the barracks, into the restaurants, into the art galleries, into the courts of justice . . ." Brecht lays out and cuts open before us the sick corrupted body of capitalist society.

CLARENCE WEINSTOCK.

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I am not trying to play some radio game. These are questions that are asked of anybody who criticizes capitalism or speaks up in defense of the labor movement or the New Deal. These and hundreds of other questions are answered in *Labor Fact Book IV*.

It seems to me that the Labor Research Association has done a better job than ever before. This volume is clearer and compacter and more wisely selective than its predecessors. Its statements have a precision that makes misinterpretation impossible. It has none of the kind of academic super-cautiousness that amounts to misrepresentation, but it is rigidly factual.

The last two years have been so important that even the statistical tables sometimes make

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exciting reading, and one could read the book right straight through with considerable satisfaction. But whether you read it through or not, you must have it on your shelves so that you can produce the facts when they're needed. GRANVILLE HICKS.

Mama Loves Papa

THOSE FIRST AFFECTIONS, *by Dorothy Van Doren. Houghton Mifflin Co. $2.50.*

IF THIS reader had stopped at page 50 or so she would have reported that *Those First Affections* was a rather self-conscious and not very interesting tale of childhood; that it had a Papa who was a model of stuffed-shirt complacency, a Mama and a daughter as artificial as the "rats" which women of that ancient time, the years from 1902 to 1910, wore in their hair. This reader kept sneaking off to other childhoods; she went playing with Ruth and Eileen, Biff and Netty, she thought of Studs and his gang. How many children and how many child worlds there are! Up to page 50 or so this particular child lived on the right side of the railroad tracks and how stupid it all seems.

If this reader had stopped . . . but she took a grip on herself and read on and was rewarded. After a bad start Papa turns out to be a very human person. He even bets on the horses, and on this subject is as mad as any Daniel Fuchs hero. Papa, Mama, and little Sarah (whom Papa calls Mike) lead an apparently secure existence in a nice house with nice china and cut-glass and hothouse grapes until Papa throws up his job after a fight with the boss over, of all things, the horses. Not that the boss disapproves; very much the contrary. The boss also plays the ponies and he accuses Papa of trying to steal his system, or at least of trying to figure it out. This, it seems, is almost a crime in racing circles. Papa denies the charge and says he's quitting. The boss says he takes it back and hopes Papa won't quit, but Papa is always a great one for a peeve and willingly cuts off his nose to spite his face.

Papa has no job now but he takes Mama and little Sarah to Florida anyway because he is that kind of a guy. Papa hopes to make a living for his family by serious concentration on the races but it is no go.

The rest of the story is not so much a tale of childhood as a description of poverty and its humiliations. They borrow from friends, they pawn, they sell, they live in a furnished room instead of the fine house. Papa cannot get a job or gets only unskilled work which never lasts long. Papa once says bitterly that he wished Grandpa had let him learn a trade but Grandpa had not thought a trade genteel. Papa was to be white-collar.

Papa's and Mama's dearest wish is to keep reality from their child. Papa and Mama and

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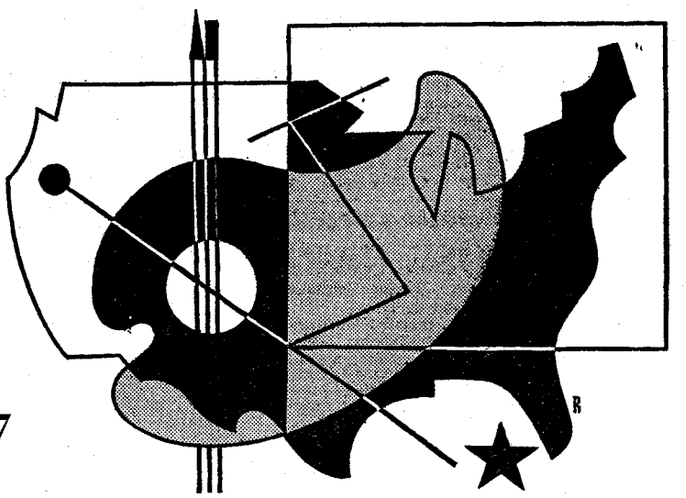

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Mrs. Van Doren are so successful that the reality of their life is withheld from the reader too. This reader would have liked to feel that last nickel, to bite it between her teeth. But it's all just a dream. They are all going to wake up some day and find themselves once again in the house with the cut-glass and china.

This book is another sweet for the classes. But it is not without understanding. Mama and Papa love each other, Papa thinks Mama is more beautiful than Lillian Russell, but Papa and Mama quarrel frequently and Sarah cannot escape from the sound of their quarrels. Thinks Sarah: "Dimly she suspected that it was the old trouble over again—money. That was what made people cross without reason, worried all the time and likely to express their anxiety in strange ways." PAULINE LEADER.

★

Brief Reviews

CHARLES LAUGHTON AND I, *by Elsa Lanchester. Harcourt, Brace & Co. $3.50.*

Mrs. Charles Laughton likes Mr. Charles Laughton, as natural and right. But *Charles Laughton and I* is no book for readers who do not partake of the same honest enthusiasm. It is a record, well documented with publicity stills and the author's own amateur photography, of how Charles progressed in his career from *The Sign of the Cross* (here an anecdote about Cecil B. DeMille) to *Henry VIII* (anecdote about Alexander Korda) to *Mutiny on the Bounty* (anecdote about Irving Thalberg). The anecdotes are not very good. "Reading this book," writes Charles Laughton himself in a whole-hearted introduction, ". . . you feel somewhat as if you had been kicked by the hind leg of a giraffe." Perhaps he is prejudiced. You feel considerably pushed around, I admit. *Charles Laughton and I* observes the simple ethics of the fan magazines. Every now and then the Laughtons give gay parties for the theatrical set in their little flat in London. Gertrude Lawrence, Norma Shearer, and Marlene Dietrich, to hear Mrs. Laughton tell it, are jolly and at the same time gracious and entirely sincere. Also, of course, they think the world of Charles. ROBERT TERRALL.

WE'LL TO THE WOODS NO MORE, *by Edouard Dujardin. Translated by Stuart Gilbert. New Directions. $2.*

This charming and evocative little novel, which was published in the original French in 1887, is important chiefly because of its historical place in contemporary fiction—it is the first stream-of-consciousness novel ever written. James Laughlin IV, in an epilogue which should have been a preface, quotes a statement from James Joyce to the effect that Joyce had read Dujardin before he began to work on *Ulysses*. Thus the method which Dujardin invented to catch the tenuous fluctuations of a love affair between a young student and an actress in late nineteenth-century Paris, reaches its apotheosis in Molly Bloom's monologue at the close of *Ulysses;* and the idea of recurrence of motif, in literature, which Dujardin attempted under the influence of Wagner, was later to receive its triumphant justification in the symphonic prose works of Marcel Proust and Thomas Mann. It would be unfortunate indeed, however, if the burden of critical genealogy should obscure the authentic delicacy of this beautifully written novel, which has all the grace and spontaneity of a lyric poem.

JOSEPH FRANK.

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SIGHTS AND SOUNDS

Notes on Maxwell Anderson

THAT Kurt Weill-Maxwell Anderson musical comedy, *Knickerbocker Holiday,* playing currently on Broadway, is the classic house divided against itself. Its energetic press representatives are diligently trying to erase from the minds of prospective ticket-buyers the mistaken notion spread around by hordes of reviewers (including me) that *Knickerbocker Holiday* has a delightful score, and a book 99.44 percent reactionary.

But the left hand up at the Playwrights Company apparently knoweth not what Mr. Anderson hath up his sleeve. While the publicity man put out amiable little releases purporting to show that President Roosevelt himself thought *Knickerbocker Holiday* was just good, clean fun, Mr. Anderson stepped right up in last Sunday's New York *Times* to say his press agent a loud nay.

"Brief Preface to the Politics of *Knickerbocker Holiday,*" Mr. Anderson called his little essay on government, just to make clear that he really understood all the implications of the nasty anti-Roosevelt, anti-New Deal cracks in his new show. Mr. Anderson's philosophy of government, in case you missed the article, is a remarkable combination of romantic anarchism and black Republicanism—Herbert Hoover wearing a Proudhon toga.

Mr. Anderson begins with the old anarchist idea that all government, reactionary, progressive, Socialist, is wicked. He tacks the proud name of Jefferson on to this outmoded theory, and goes on to say:

> But the coddled young reformer of our day . . . grasps blindly at any weapon which seems to him likely to destroy the purse-proud haves and scatter their belongings among the deserving have-nots. . . . But when the weapon he finds is a law, and when the law he enacts increases the power of government over man's destinies, he is fighting a lesser tyranny by accepting a greater and more deadly one.

The Anarchists of Spain who shared Mr. Anderson's romantic notions of government until the Franco rebellion and the fascist invasion learned through bitter experience on the battlefield and in the factories that freemen cannot preserve their liberty without the discipline of a People's government. When they had to make a choice between surrendering to fascism or supporting the Popular Front, they discarded their mistaken philosophy about government and pitched in to save republican Spain.

Mr. Anderson has to make a choice too—between the New Deal and reaction. He comes out boldly for reaction. With really astonishing ignorance of the nature of fascism, he accuses the Roosevelt government of moving towards a Nazi dictatorship. With the wildest misconception of the workings of government in a capitalist society, he says blithely, "Social security is a step toward the abrogation of the individual and his absorption into that Frankenstein which he has invented to serve him—the paternal state."

A theater column is no place to outline the Marxist-Leninist theory of the state—so I will only stop to ask Mr. Anderson one question, a simple, direct one: Does the worker in a rubber factory, or a steel factory, have more freedom today under the provisions of the Wagner act, or less? "A guaranteed life is not free," Mr. Anderson says. Would the Negro in the South be more or less free, if the Anti-Lynching Bill had been passed in Congress last session?

"If the millions of workingmen in this country who are patiently paying their social security dues could glimpse the bureaucratic absolutism which that act presages for themselves and their children they would repudiate the whole monstrous and dishonest business overnight," Mr. Anderson writes. Of course, Anatole France made the classic reply to that chestnut—the bland line about the rich and the poor man being equally free to sleep under the bridge.

Mr. Anderson demands that the poor be left free to starve—a privilege which, I assure Mr. Anderson, has been much overestimated.

Charles Martin

He admits that the "accumulation of too much wealth and power in a few hands is a danger to civilization and liberty," but he reluctantly concludes that there is nothing to be done about it—lest government usurp the rights of the individual. He would strip the present Democratic government of our country of all its power to challenge monopoly capitalism's worst abuses—in the name of freedom. He calls for government by amateurs, he demands inefficiency in Washington—and this in face of the growing menace of fascism all over the world. Mr. Anderson, the anarchist, would surrender his country to the Nazi advance without striking a blow in its defense—because organizing to prevent fascism means the loss of our God-given right to starve without governmental interference, to be governed by "incompetents."

Heaven preserve our country from well-wishers such as Mr. Maxwell Anderson. Romantic anarchism was always a luxury for middle-class intellectuals. Today, by the inexorable logic of our times, it leads an American playwright directly into the arms of Herbert Hoover.

I can't help repeating what I said when I first reviewed *Knickerbocker Holiday*—what a pity that Kurt Weill's beautiful score had to be wasted on a reactionary musical-comedy book.

Truth to Your Eyes, the Madison Square Garden drama presented last week by the New York State Committee of the Communist Party, was magnificently titled. For twenty thousand people sat in the silent darkness of the great auditorium and watched the story of our times unfold on the stage far below. It is difficult to describe the almost uncanny excitement of *Truth to Your Eyes,* for it was a sort of anxious communion between the enormous audience and the actors. The drama, played on a center stage in the vast auditorium, was at once a magnificent pageant and an intimate play. The plot for *Truth to Your Eyes* was quite simple—the story of Ethiopia, Spain, China, and Czechoslovakia. Lee Roberts, the gifted author of the play, rose admirably to his great opportunity—for he had a stage and an audience big enough to do justice to his mighty material.

Reinhardt brought the pageant back to the modern theater, and for a time stage directors were bemused by such colossally empty pieces of drama as *The Miracle.* But gradually the

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sweeping pageant died away as a force in the modern theater for the simple reason that no playwright had anything tremendous enough to be said in terms of audiences of twenty thousand and stages covering blocks. The last big pageant on Broadway, the story of the Jews, flopped dismally because it bored its audiences to death.

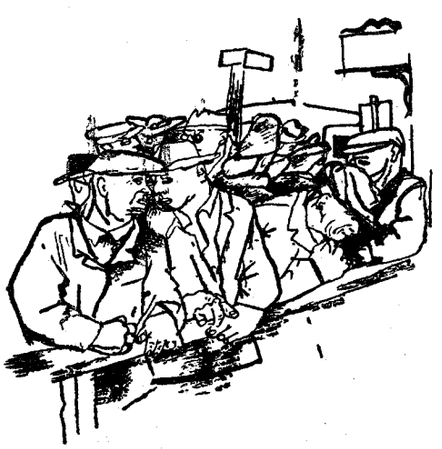
The Communist Party of New York State has revived the pageant, with great success. *Truth to Your Eyes* is revolutionary in production and writing as well as content. The stage and the great audience are perfectly suited to the major drama of our time—man's fight against aggression. Starting with the obvious advantage of having something big enough to say to warrant the use of Madison Square Garden as a theater, the author and his talented production staff introduced a number of innovations in the old pageant technique. The most important, obviously, is the use of the Living Newspaper style on a vast scale, with lighting acting as the curtain. But Mr. Roberts uses the loudspeaker not only to explain the action on his huge stage, but also for the voices of the actors themselves. For the obvious difficulty in presenting a play at Madison Square Garden is the simple objection that most of the audience would not be able to hear the actors if they had spoken lines. Mr. Roberts solves this difficulty by dubbing in the voices of the actors from his loud speaker, and his production staff functioned so ably last week that the illusion was uncannily perfect.

Truth to Your Eyes was presented for one night only, by a large troupe of actors, production men, lighting experts, dancers who all have other jobs in the theater and could give only part of their time to rehearsal. The production was magnificently professional—and I take off my hat to this theater troupe that made up in enthusiasm what it lacked in time and money.

I suppose the Communist Party can't go into the theater business as a regular thing, but I think *Truth to Your Eyes* ought at least to go on tour, and play several more performances around New York. It was great and exciting drama.

AN UNFORTUNATE LITTLE COMEDY called *Where Do We Go From Here?* opened last week and, unless I miss my guess, will very presently close. It's a study of boys in a college fraternity house, and seemed to be as well meaning as it was dull. Mr. William Bowers, its twenty-two-year-old author, fumbles around with great themes—youth against the world, anti-Semitism, and the like, but, alas, his little play is too inept to be effective.

RUTH MCKENNEY.



John Heliker

Ballet—
Old and New

THE reorganized Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo and the reconstructed Mordkin company held the center of the dance stage these past weeks. It was all spectacular enough, theatrical enough, and unquestionably a reflection of the thinking and living ways of a considerable section of society—but, for all the large and consistently enthusiastic audience that crowded its performances, the kind of ballet offered to the public this season, revival or new, scarcely made for people's theater, people's dance, or just plain entertainment for the people.

Russian princes, enchanted swans, glove girls from the Left Bank of Paris, either bank of the Danube, animated plants, sorcerer's magic, fairytale in one way or another, daydream preoccupation with unrealities, is neither of the people nor in its interest. Nor does anything revolutionary by way of form crop up in these shows to compensate for the poverty of their thematic materials.

Massine dances admirably, but he offers nothing technically or ideologically that wasn't there before. Neither does Mordkin. Their ballet is sometimes brilliant, even exciting, always brittle and too often dull.

Of the Ballet Russe's new productions, *Seventh Symphony* hits a new low for painfully trite and nebulous romantic effusion, and *Bogatyri* collects flora and fauna from *Coq d'Or, Aurora's Wedding,* and a host of other ballets, for some completely unimportant legend of princesses and dragons and more princesses. Even its *Gaîté Parisienne,* for all its elegant costuming, its comedy, its high-stepping can-can, and its exceptional dancing by Danilova, is pretty thin stuff that won't take a quick re-sitting.

Mordkin's stuff is principally revision. His new ballet, *Trepak,* entertains a number of good intentions, but proves a confusion of peasant dances, religious orgies, and a Devil, a sort of rustic Falstaff, carrying off the fair maiden and whatever other honors. *Voices of Spring* is completely reminiscent of every other Blue Danube ballet, pleasant, light, and utterly unimportant for all the exceedingly pleasing dancing of Patricia Bowman, Karen Conrad, Leon Varkas, etc.

The Monte Carlo Ballet has been reorganized, not renovated, the Mordkin Ballet reconstructed, not rejuvenated. There are new faces, but not new concepts. Their ballet remains largely ballet not for the people.

Of a healthier if less elaborate nature were

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the simple folk and theater pieces of the Korean, Sai Shoki, who uses elegant masks and costumes, wit, and a sensitivity for the small emotions, to provide a gratifying if limited evening in the concert hall.

Tamiris, in the Washington Irving High School Theater, where people are provided with all the best in dancing at 50 cents a ticket, presented in an excellent performance among a dozen compositions, her early *South American, Impressions of a Bull Ring,* as well as *Cassandra* out of her most recent *Trojan Incident.* On the same program, displaying considerable development, Ida Soyer presented her *War Face, Last Spring* and, with Ida Little and Bettina Mershon, a group of Negro Spirituals. It was a good show.

More on the folk side of the ledger were Argentinita, whose dancing draws for inspiration on the struggle of her people against fascism, Antonio Triana, and Pilar Lopez in a program of Sevillas, Farrucas, Bulerias, Malagas, the repertory of Spanish dancing. The dance, however, that stopped the show was *Anda Jaleo* to a song of Garcia Lorca (murdered by the fascists in Granada), a warm, gay, and simple Gypsy trio of the spirit that must right now be holding the bridgeheads on the Ebro and the Segre. Spanish dancing is like that: completely human, bubbling over with the foibles and the passions of the folk, sharp, honest, and, more than all else, direct, simple, and straightforward—especially when done by such excellent dancers as Argentinita and her ensemble. OWEN BURKE.

The Music Week

ONLY occasionally does an artist appear who molds means of expression and intellectual concept into a perfect whole. Such an artist is Povla Frijsh. Her program at Town Hall this week showed that, unlike many another singer, her voice is not her only asset, since she possesses in addition a discriminating and resourceful mind. There is no shabby mysticism about Mme. Frijsh's approach. Study and consideration of the music and the embodied ideas of the composer lead to an understanding on her part which is most successfully projected to the audience. The pleasure of listening to Povla Frijsh is the pleasure of entering into the meaning of music as expressed by those composers who devoted their art to the writing of song. Great voices have for so long been dragging the art of singing into the quagmires of booby-hatch song literature, that perhaps it is inevitable that there shall soon arise a new race of vocalists, from whom we may demand, first of all, brains. This writer offers his heartfelt thanks to a singer, who, through her performance and program making, has saved for him some illusions. After all, a vocalist may be more than a leather-lunged dynamo for whom making music is synonymous with making money.

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Directed by Charles Friedman
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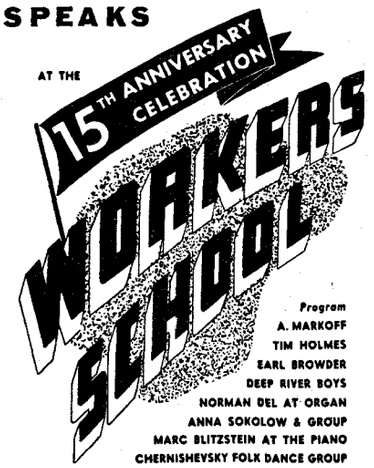

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CALENDAR

of New Masses Events

Nov. 13-27—"We Like America." Art Exhibition and Sale. A.C.A. Gallery, 52 West 8th Street, N. Y. C.

Dec. 3—Saturday evening—27th Annual New Masses Ball—Music by Savoy Sultans, Webster Hall, 119 East 11th Street, N. Y. C.

Dec. 23—Friday evening—"From Spirituals to Swing"—An evening of American Negro Music. Featuring Count Basie—Carnegie Hall, 57th Street and Seventh Avenue, N. Y. C.

Dec. 31—New Year's Eve. Group Theatre Production of Irwin Shaw's "Gentle People" with Franchot Tone and Sylvia Sidney.

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COLUMBIA HAS ISSUED three new record albums in their Masterworks series. They are: *Nocturnes* for orchestra by Debussy (Set 344); the Brahms *Waltzes* for piano (Set 342); and Albert Roussel's *Quartet in D-Major* (Set 399). The Debussy set comprises the well known *Nuages, Fêtes,* and *Sirèns,* played by the "Orchestre des Festivals Debussy" under the baton of D. E. Inghelbrecht.

There is no need to mention here the elusive quality of Debussy's music, and certainly it would be redundant to label him once again as an "impressionist"; yet this recording is highly demonstrative of these oft-mentioned characteristics, inasmuch as the conductor has emphasized the "shimmering" and "delicate" element. The last side of the set is a curious choice in recording—two *Fanfares,* one by Debussy (from *Le Martyre de Saint Sebastien*), the other by Dukas (from *La Peri*). If "fanfares" are an end in themselves, perhaps there is good reason for this record, though there might as well be a recording of various "appoggiaturas" as used by Mozart or Beethoven. However, let it not be thought that the last side detracts from the ultimate value of the whole set.

The Brahms *Waltzes* are played by Anatole Kitain, and they include the Opus 39, numbers 1 to 16. The ingratiating tunefulness of these short pieces gives ample proof that Brahms was not always in a brown study despite the calumny which is often spread about the bearded burgher. Kitain, as pianist, gives a competent and sometimes exciting performance to the *Waltzes,* and all in all, their gaiety and buoyancy are well delivered. The set also includes the *Ballade in D-Minor.*

The works of Albert Roussel (1869-1937) are not often met with in the general run of music. They represent, rather, the out-of-the-way music, not (at the moment) innovative enough to arouse excited partisanship or conservative enough to be outrightly damned by the *avant-garde.* Notwithstanding his attachment to certain characteristics of his teacher, D'Indy, and his contemporary, Debussy, Roussel managed to establish a quiet and personal musical speech which could be no better exemplified than by the *Quartet.* This composition, a mature creation of Roussel (written about the same time as his *Third Symphony*) shows his devotion to a formality and seriousness which have come to mark his music. The performance is by the famous Roth Quartet, who interpret this work with sensitivity and conviction.

Columbia has also issued Gustave Holst's *St. Paul's Suite* in ten-inch records (17113-D and 17114-D). This musical dedication to the girls' school at which Holst taught is pleasant, folk-like music, well played by the Jacques String Orchestra, with (surely not a coincidence) Reginald Jacques as conductor.

MUSICIANS ARE NOT STANDING IDLY BY while Nazi terrorism continues its loathsome course—a Musicians Committee Against Nazi Brutality has been formed with Wallingford Rieg-

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ger as chairman. By the time this goes to press, they will have sent out up to six hundred letters asking for signatures from prominent musicians to endorse a mass protest on a cultural front. All those active in a musical capacity are urged to get in touch with the committee through the chairman at 352 West 18th St., New York City, in the event that, through oversight, they receive no communication.

JOHN SEBASTIAN.

Tory Film

A QUIET week, unbroken save by the worst picture to be seen here for some time—*Sixty Glorious Years,* or 120 dreadful minutes in the Music Hall. It's the tory English up to their queasy game of varnishing the great dead—in this case Queen Victoria and the flourishing era of imperialism. The film is a dull collection of badly colored postcards of Great Statesmen, generals, and castles. The old empire is bursting at the seams so the lickspittle film industry is employed to remind the people of the old lady who acted as a fence for the loot of empire. It is an appropriate souvenir of the degraded culture of perfidious Chamberlain's Albion. Anton Walbrook, refugee from Hitler, plays the German prince consort whose peculiar position in Victorian England is used to suggest that the English people should be more tolerant toward another German, Mr. Chamberlain's pal, Adolf. Poor Walbrook! He escapes from prison only to fall into Chamberlain's hands.

JAMES DUGAN.

World's Fair Art News

FROM eight hundred to a thousand paintings, sculptures, and prints by living American artists will be exhibited at the World's Fair, New York, 1939, according to information given out last week by the committees in charge of the exhibition of contemporary American art. After a determined effort of progressive artists' organizations to obtain recognition of contemporary Americans at the much publicized World's Fair, the battle has been won to the extent that *artists'* committees will select the work to be exhibited from the six regions, New England, the Central states, the national capital and surrounding states, the Southern states, the Southwestern states, the Rocky Mountain states, and the Pacific Coast states.

This is a major victory for organized artists, especially as the original plan of the World's Fair did not include contemporary American art. Artists living outside the metropolitan area must submit their work in Regions 1, 2, and 3 before February 15 and in Regions 4, 5, and 6 before February 8. Further information may be obtained from "Exhibition of Contemporary American Art, New York World's Fair, 1939," 350 Fifth Ave., New York City.

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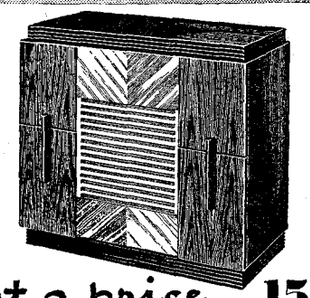

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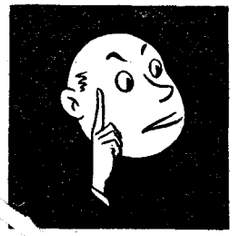
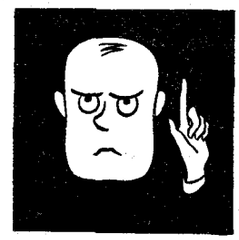
The Ostrich Atlanticus. Thinks what goes on in Europe is none of America's business and the way to keep out of trouble is to keep on thanking God for that wonderful old Atlantic Ocean.

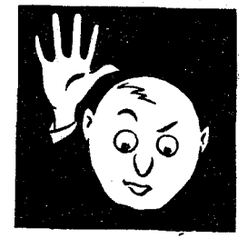


The Yes-Yes-But-er. England and France should have stuck together Yes, yes, and saved Czechoslovakia, but—why should the ALP work with Democrats and but—why doesn't Lewis make up with William Green?

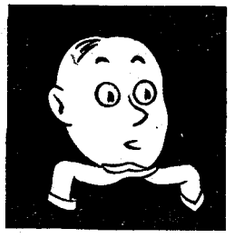
The Too-Timid Soul. He's a teacher, so he knows he ought to get into the fight. But he's still scared of being seen at a meeting or reading *New Masses.* Somebody might think he's a big, bad Red.



The Peace-at-Any-Pricer. Thinks peace-for-us is worth any price so long as someone else pays it. Does he know Hearst suggests we do a Chamberlain when Japan gets ready to grab the Philippines?



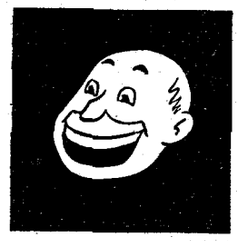
The Fence-Sitter. Has straddled issues everywhere for so long he failed to notice that the fences have disappeared from under him leaving him in a pretty ridiculous position.



The Gullible Guy. Reads (and believes!) the liberal papers, swallows the Dies lies, thinks the Communists really want to control the unions. But, why should he care? It's none of his business. He doesn't belong to one.

The Can't-Take-It Type. Can't stand to look Truth in the face. *New Masses* makes him want to go on picket lines, write to the President, boycott Germany and Japan. Then what will happen to his precious private life?

Redder than the Rose. He hands it to the Soviet Union the way they've worked for peace. But these Communists here are sissies. Why, they work with liberals and Catholics, and descend to voting for mere "progressives."



The Why-Not-Try-Humor-ist. Thought *New Masses* was too, too serious. The way to fight Hoover, Hearst, and Hitler is to laugh them off with a few more good cartoons. He may not be so sure of this since the "peace" at Munich.

The Tut-Tut-er. He never met a Nazi here. He never saw an anti-Semitic pamphlet. Ergo, they are no danger. Those nervous anti-Fascists are always seeing bogeys. You better get this one before he falls for more of Mr. Hoover.

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OUR FRIENDS are horrified at Hitler's depravity, at Chamberlain's treason, at the s against labor's hard-won rights in nce. But do they translate this indigna- n into recognition of the forces that are lotting the same sort of thing right here at ome? Their indifference, their confusion, their inactivity is a constant danger to you. Think how different Europe might be today if Germany's middle class had known the truth about Hitler. If England had had a NEW MASSES, as John Strachey wishes they had. Think what's ahead for America unless your friends understand what Reaction plans for them—and understand *in time!*

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